

Two Betrayals

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Summary: In the neighboring arm of the Milkyway Galaxy, a Forerunner planet lies. But can two once opposed soldiers survive alone? M for Lang/Gore/Lemon(s) OC/OC pairing(s)

1. Chapter 1

Two Betrayals Chapter 1

_Stranded, alone, __betrayed__ even. Each of these thoughts dug their way through my mind as I ran through the dense jungle of an unnamed planet._

_About a year and a month ago, the UNSC had found a Forerunner planet on the skirt of the neighboring arm of the galaxy and sent a fleet of four cruisers, nineteen Destroyers, thirty-two Frigates and fifteen ONI corvettes just to investigate. In total, the trip had taken three years, the AI's being left to guard us as we slept. During the passage of the void space between them, we lost about a quarter of the fleet, our orders to carry on until half the fleet was lost or destroyed. Upon reaching the edge of the neighboring arm, we were attacked by something. We didn't know what, but we didn't really care either. The aggressor force was quickly converged on and decimated by volley after volley of MAC fire. After finishing off the newfound enemy, we made our way to the target system. _

The planet was large, about the size of four earths and covered in structures. The buildings were so expansive you could even see them from high orbit. After a few moments spent on celebration of being the first human force to venture out of the Orion arm we launched landing forces. Charon class Frigates and Pelicans alike descended into the atmosphere, intent of dropping Marines in open fields and cities while the ODS detachments were dropped in tighter areas like mountain ranges and atop massive buildings.

â€|_Little did we know what was lying in wait for usâ€|_

1700, 2558, October 5**th****, EARTH TIME **

**Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegieâ€" UNSC Marine
ODST**

**Location â€" 1700-mile wide city on unknown forerunner planet:
assumed warehousing district center structure.**

Condition â€" Operationalâ€"|

"Why does this never get easier," Iceman screamed into his com channel as his SOEIV pod fell towards the structures below. Even being a seasoned veteran of the Harvest conflict, he never quite got the hang of keeping his testicles out of his throat during a drop.

"Ha ha," Fire team leader Davis "Sarge" Cowen, laughed. "I've seen you take on a brute leader without flinching, Iceman. But you always scream like a little bitch during a drop," The Sergeant continued to laugh in his deep baritone voice. Iceman reached out and punched the display for his team leader, splintering the holo-projector before the braking chute flared out. Iceman was jostled around the pod, his helmet slamming into the back of the padded seat before the chute let go. The feeling of weightlessness filled him again, the scenery of the city rising up into view of the glass of the pod door. The light was blotted out by walls and towers, the structures a strange shining silver material. Iceman was jolted again as the reverse thrusters fired, bringing him to yet another midair stop before landing hard on a structure's roof.

"Dammit," Iceman repeated as the pod listed backwards, rolling onto its back. He reached out with both his fists and feet, striking the explosive bolts and sending the door skyward. He had heard the stories before, the ones about the pod lying still before firing off the door bolts and crushing the soldier inside on its way down. The door crashed onto the roof twenty feet to the left, Iceman grabbing the M7S from its harness to his right before ducking up over the lip of the pod door. He did a quick scan of the area, finding it quite deserted.

"This is Iceman," He called over the com channel to his squad. "My LZ is clear, moving to high ground to begin strategic recon." He cut the line, activating his tracking beacon before climbing out of the drop pod. He leaned back over, tearing out the seat and stashing seven MRE packets into his chest pocket. He stood back up, holding a MA5C in his right hand. He slipped the rifle into the clamps on the back of his chest harness, reaching back into the pod for magazines. He opened several panels on the pod, grabbing stashed ammo pouches and grenades before depositing them in pockets built into his armor.

"Where am I?" Iceman said to himself as he activated the VISR in his helmet with a thought. The screen flashed to life, polarizing his visor to display the information. A tactical map sent down from the Paris class Frigate Gladius pixilated onto his visor before clearing into something discernible. From the readings and measurements, the building he was atop was about two thousand feet above ground level and five miles from the edge of the urban area. There were only three landmarks discernible from the ground, a tower in the center of the

city, a smoke stack in the east quadrant and the wall that surrounded the whole of the city. The map placed a beacon on his map, showing him the nearest entry point on the roof as well as the other five members of his Fire team.

Iceman kicked the trapdoor open, the latch on the rusty steel door holding fast as the oxidized metal fell apart. He made a quick mental note to not stand on anything reddish orange before dropping into the level below him. His VISR quickly adjusted to the change in lighting inside the structure, outlining everything in the room with yellow. The change was, however, unneeded; the lights in the room flaring to life as he landed. The room wasn't furnished; save for a few counters and tables that dotted the walls. It seemed to be a laboratory of sorts, beakers and tubes littered the surfaces while machinery he had no understanding of filled the shelves and segments of walls. "What kind of people lived here?" He asked as he began to record the mission with the helmet's built in camera. Iceman made his way around the level, passing through doorways and descending ramp after ramp. Stairs seemed rather sparse, Iceman noticed as he reached the fourth floor below him, but what he really wished they had installed were some elevators.

"Thank god," He muttered as he spotted a hollow in a wall with a platform and holo-panel. He rushed over to the elevator, confirming it was clear before walking in. "Where is the ground floor," He asked no one, receiving a flash on the panel before him and a hum of machinery as the door closed. "Shit," He growled, trying to get his fingers between the doors before the floor beneath him began to descend. Iceman sighed as he let go, realizing forerunner tech must have voice commands as he relaxed slightly. What he had done would have gotten him killed back in Orion, the elevator being booby trapped by a plasma charge or something.

"Iceman, Geiger, call back bro," The com called into his ears as he watched the levels pass by through the window in the elevator door. It was the team engineer, Carlos "Geiger" Francisco. More than once had this man saved their asses with a jerry rigged nuclear device, leading them to labeling him with his call-sign. Iceman sent three beeps through the line, letting him know he was listening. "I'm at the base of the building you're in man, and you may not like what I got to say."

"What could be that bad," Iceman asked, watching the counter on the Holo-panel continue to assumedly diminish in value. "I think the only thing you could tell me is thatâ€¦"

"Yeah I know," Geiger interrupted. Iceman's radio erupted with chatter from the squads, calls for med-evac and reinforcements blaring loud before being silenced, "I got two elite units outside the building, along with a squad of grunts and a brute." Iceman felt the blood run out of his body before his adrenal response kicked in to overdrive, fueling his memories of training in hand to hand and being a solo operator. "And the worst news is that apparently your elevator opens into the street right next to the Elite that pressed a button on the side of the doors." Iceman growled in frustration, having slipped on considering someone else having started the ride. "I got just enough cover to give the brute and grunts a bad mortality issue, but the elites are out of range." Ice man paced back and forth in the elevator, drawing his MA5C and loading a magazine into it.

"I got 'em," He assured Geiger as he released the action on the rifle and leveled it at the general height of an Elite. "Just make sure there aren't any others. I can't take any more than two of these bastards." He looked out of a small window next to the door, finding himself rapidly descending from the quarter height mark as the brute moved its Spike Rifle up.

"Wait, something's happening," Geiger said as Plasma fire resounded through the streets, followed quickly by the sounds of brute weapons. Iceman watched as the brute and grunts opened fire on the Elites, one being maimed by the plasma and foot long spikes before the other jumped back and away from the fire, a cloaking device activating. "Holy Mary, mother of God," Geiger said. "Did you just see that?! They opened fire on their own!" Iceman readied himself as the elevator neared the end of the trip, intent on mowing down the enemy as soon as he touched down.

"Forget that, just shoot when I come out!" Iceman ordered, asserting his rank as the door opened. He let loose with his AR, the thirty-two round mag emptying in a matter of seconds. He ducked back around a corner as he heard Geiger open fire with his M90CAWS shotgun. Iceman drew his M7S, ducking out of cover to deliver a three round burst to the skull of the brute that had turned around to fire on the new assailant. The hulking beast dropped to the ground with a thud, Iceman holstering his M7 before moving to reload the assault rifle. "Carlos, are you still alive?" He yelled out into the street, loading a round into the chamber before holstering the rifle and reloading his M7. Iceman ducked from one edge of the door to the other quickly, scanning the area for the all clear. Carlos had failed to respond to Iceman's roll call.

"Carlos?" Iceman called over the com, looking around the door. Across the street was Carlos, the Elite that had presumably escaped the brute's betrayal holding him by the back of his chest harness.

"Human," The Spec-ops elite said before releasing Carlos into the street. The Elite's voice was surprisingly high pitched and smooth to Iceman, the usual being deep and rough. "I thank you for saving my life. I have suspected the Jiralhanae of subterfuge since my arrival to Tranquility, but I could not plea my case to the prophets. I assure you that if you happen across any of my comrades you shall not be harmed." The elite clasped its hand over its breastplate, cloaking again and disappearing in full.

"What the hell just happened?" Carlos asked Iceman, standing back up and holstering his shotgun in its clamps. Iceman sighed, letting his sub-machinegun hang loose in his hand.

"I think we just entered a whole new war," Iceman said, checking his HUD for the locations of the remaining members of his squad. Heavy was two miles west, being the closest to his location. "Come on, we need to regroup and get up with the remaining landing force." Iceman and Geiger walked cross the street, turning down a rather wide alleyway as they converged on Heavy's locator beacon.

1500 hours, 2558, October 4**th****, EARTH TIME**

Location: Prophet of Moral's Flagship: The Redemption and Sacrifice

****Sangheilli special operations domo Lei 'Zamamee****

****Status: Operationalâ€¦ ****

Lei walked down the spine of the Battle Cruiser Redemption and Sacrifice, having acquired orders from the mouth of a Jiralhanae chieftain that Moral wanted to see her in person. It wasn't uncommon for Moral to wish to speak with his underlings, but one as low ranked as her was. She was not a sword master like the Zealots and Majors, neither did she have a high standing amongst the ground forces on the Redemption. It was perplexing that a prophet would wish an audience with her, especially since the chieftain had mentioned he would understand if she was unable to attend his request. 'Something is amiss,' she thought as she entered the lateral elevator. 'I have only once been met by a prophet, and even then it was a minor event and a low ranking one.'

The elevator hummed quietly as it glided through the hollow of the massive ship, rocking at irregular intervals as the ship maneuvered amongst the fleet. Lei watched as the elevator approached the station of her destination, the platform crowded by grunts and Jiralhanae. 'Dishonorable beasts,' she jeered inwardly. She had been opposed to their induction to the Holy Covenant, finding them to be far too unclean for the prophets' mission. A small smile colored her face as the platform stopped, the ape like beings boarding the transport as she disembarked. The human name for them, Brutes, was the only one she believed they had named correctly. A Chieftain jeered at her, striking an opposing stance before backing away as she extended the plasma dagger in her vambrace.

Lei continued her trek across the massive ship, turning several corners to the next transit car. The prophets resided in the bow of their flagship, segregating themselves from the other races of the Covenant save a contingent of honor guards. She boarded the car, holding the door as a fellow Sangheilli called out to her. She waved to her friend, surprised to find the male aboard the Redemption. "Lofei," Lei greeted cheerfully. "What a surprise. I had no idea you were here." The Major Domo boarded the car, Lei closing the door and activating the vehicle.

"Nor I you," Lofei replied, catching his breath from the extended sprint. "What occasion marks this encounter?" Lei fidgeted slightly, slightly embarrassed that she had a private council with Moral.

"Moral wished to speak with me," She admitted sheepishly, squeezing her helmet between her hands lightly. "I just received notification several moments ago from the Jiralhanae from fiftieth battalion." Lofei made a gesture of disgust at the mention of Tartarus' nephew.

"Disgraceful," Lofei spat. "Fiftieth battalion, I mean. Truths decision to have those brutes in charge of our brothers and sisters is neigh on heresy." Lei nodded her agreement. Many of her brethren shared the same thoughts. "Luck seems to be with us both, having not been forced to submit to them saves us our honor."

"Yes, well it seems I may not have that privilege for long," She admitted. "Hearsay is my squadron is about to undergo the same

changes after this mission."

"And what a stain on this discovery that statement is," Lofei said. "One of the most efficient squadrons in the Covenant Armada's final proper deployment is to study Tranquility." He shook his head. "At least you can say that you have that, my friend." She shrugged slightly, noticing the platform was approaching quickly. "I pray that you receive good news." Lei nodded, clasping Lofei on the shoulder before she departed.

As the transit departed, Lei made her way to Moral's sanctum, the large doors placed before the station. The hall was short, but it felt like an eternity to Lei. With each step, a new thought or worry entered her mind. What could be so important about her that Moral had wished an audience, nay requested if she had the spare time to see him? 'Calm yourself, Lei,' she thought as she arrived at the large bulkhead. 'You can do this. It may be just an informal occasion and you were next in line.' She raised her hand to knock, the rap from her knuckles echoing louder than she thought it should have.

The doors opened, the chamber inside cloaked in shadow. The only visible things in the room were the honor guard, path and Moral himself. "Lei 'Zamamee," Moral spoke with his back to her. "Your name is one of great honor. Not a Zamam have I met that had not total devotion to the Holy Covenant. Please, enter." Moral waved his hand, the Honor Guard turning to the door and marching out. Lei entered as they exited, the bulkhead closing behind her as she stepped through the portal. "I trust your stay has been pleasant upon my ship," Moral asked, motioning to the table next to him. It was laden with treats and drinks.

"Yes sir," She said, walking closer and taking a cup of water from the table. "I have not had a complaint about even my quarters." Moral nodded, lacing his fingers together.

"Good, good," He turned his view to her, his expression slightly off. "Not even complaints about the quantity of Jiralhanae?" Lei stopped the glass in her hand halfway to her mouth, wondering what he was at. "There is no need for secrecy, Lei. I too wish Truth had chosen another option. But alas, my objections are not heeded by our leader. Have you noticed Truth's bold actions to even my own ship?" Lei shrugged slightly, unsure how to respond. "Did you fail to notice that my honor guard is now more than half Jiralhanae? Truth has overstepped his boundaries." Lei was shocked at her own slip, having passed directly by them on her way in.

"I tell you this because it will benefit you nearly exclusively," Moral said, turning in full to face her. "Beware the Brutes. They seem to have an agenda that even I am unaware of. You may fare better than most, being in control of your assets for this mission, which I may add is upon us." He glanced out the large view port in his chamber. Lei looked as well, the Forerunner world looming closer by the second. "Do not trust any of them, Sangheilli. Keep an eye on them at all times." Lei nodded, clasping her fist over her chest. "I advise that you gather your squadron. The landing is upon us."

2000 hours, 2558, October 4**th****, EARTH TIME**

**Location: Mid-Atmosphere of Forerunner planer

Tranquility**

Sangheilli special operations domo Lei 'Zamamee

**Status: Operationalâ€| **

Lei's head was filled with the prophets words even as the Phantom descended toward the ground of Tranquility, the Forerunner world the ancient texts from the holy relic spoke of. Lei's mind cleared in nearly an instant as she gazed upon the majestic cities through the bay door's porthole, ones whole and preserved rather than the ruins on Sanghelios. The urban environs melded with the natural forests and plains almost seamlessly, a large city walls on the periphery of each one the only barrier. Her view was skewed by clouds as they descended into the troposphere, a fog having settled over the forest below them before the doors had opened. Her mind returned to the prophets warning again, her vision switching between the Jiralhanae in the bay with her and the bay door frame often. She had never trusted them, but followed Truth's decision.

"Zamamee," A high-pitched voice said to her right. She blinked twice, her lateral lids closing before settling on the red armored Ung'goy that had addressed her. She remembered him from previous deployments, number five-thousand and three. "Are you well, leader?" He asked. "You seem distracted." She smiled and crouched to eye level with the gray creature, patting him atop the head gently.

"I'm fine Five," She said, using the name he preferred. "Just pre-deployment jitters, that's all." Five nodded once, handing her a necklace. "What is this?" She asked, taking the small trinket and looking at it with meticulous observance. It had a teardrop of violet metal as a pendant, Lei recognizing it as a piece of Sangheilli armor plate.

"Your father, Hiro 'Zamamee, gave it to me before his death," Five said. "It has always been lucky for me, but I am reaching the end of my time. Perhaps it could do you more good now." Lei smiled, placing the charm around her neck. She had never spent much time with her father, the gesture striking a bell within her heart.

"Thank you Five," she said. "I will miss you dearly." He nodded, the fact of his short lifespan having no obvious effect on his morale. The grunt handed her a needle rifle and three grenades, turning around to dispense plasma pistols to the other grunts in the squad. Lei stood back up, watching the goings on in the phantom. The brute in the craft stared at her with a wolfish gaze, his eyes never leaving her. "If you have nothing to say Drail I suggest you avert your eyes." The brute captain scoffed, resting the spine of his spike rifle on his shoulder.

"Will you be able to cloak with that around your neck?" Drail asked, pointing an almost accusing finger at her. "Would you endanger the mission with a solitary trinket?" Lei snapped her mandibles, closing them again before donning her helmet. She looked away from the brute, staring out the bay door now that the clouds had passed.

"Zamamee," The pilot elite called back from his seat. "The fleet wants you to know that they are falling back to a defensive position. We are landing in five minutes, be ready." Lei nodded once, pressing a button on the interior wall of the Phantom to open the doors. The

violet metal separated in the center by an inch along a four way split, the quarters folding back into their respective holding crevices. The air, unlike Sanghelios or the Human planet Harvest, smelled of nature and a pristine condition; the fossil fuels the humans and Sangheilli had burned tainting the air on their planets. The Grunts had gathered behind Lei, gazing and exclaiming in awe at the sights. "The Journey holds much promise this day, does it not Lei?" the pilot asked, getting a slight smile from the team leader.

****1650 hours, 2558, October 5****th****, EARTH TIME****

****Location: Former Research and Development sector of the capitol city on Tranquility****

****Sangheilli special operations domo Lei 'Zamamee****

****Status: Operationalâ€¦ ****

Lei walked along the barren road in the Forerunner city, her eyes drifting from building to building in wonder and awe. The Ung'goy were likewise entranced, exclaiming and chattering among themselves, some even taking pictures with their helmets and storing them on data cards to look at later. Lei was happy however to simply take in the sights and remember them in her later years, scenarios running through her mind as she talked with an unnamed husband and several children. She allowed herself an unseen smile, hoping to the gods that her wish would one day come true. She was torn from her mind though as several loud pops were heard overhead, Lei raising her Needle Rifle to the sky and finding what she knew was coming; Humans, ODS pods to be exact. Elsewhere in the sky, human ships and transport craft descended, moving toward the ground away from her area. "Foul dogs!" She screamed at them as they came down, one landing atop a building not too far ahead of them. "They dare desecrate this holy world with their heretical existence!" Another Sangheilli they had rendezvoused with, a black armored orbital strike soldier, looked to the sky to see the door from one of the ODS pods rocketing away. "Come, we fight!" Lei ordered, hurrying her pace to the base of the building and being met by the strike fighter.

"What do you plan to do," he asked her. "Even though they are weak, they outnumber our forces by twenty! I do not believe any of our forces will survive." Lei ignored him, deciding to at least take down one before they were ordered to glass the planet. She pressed the holo-pad to the left of the door, activating the lift to the roof of the tower.

"They have brought with them the imminent destruction of this planet, Thar," she said. "You know that the Prophets will view this world muddied by their presence and decree it to be glassed." Thar nodded, having already understood the implications of their landing. "Then you understand the want to kill as many as I can before we are ordered to leave." Lei glanced behind her, noticing Drail having moved closer than he usually did. "And I will be one of the few that reports attempting to cleanse them from the surface." Thar remained silent, instead clasping a fist over his chest in subservience.

"Then I shall fight as well," he said. "For honor, I will fight." Lei nodded, noticing Drail in the corner of her vision having drawn his

weapon.

'Does he wish to cleanse them as well,' she questioned her mind, still unsure of his motives and remembering the prophet's words. She decided to put faith in his actions, turning toward the door as the lift continued to descend. The platform was nearly upon them, the lights having reached the third level.

"Watch out!" Thar yelled, turning and raising his plasma rifle to fire on Drail, being met with a hail of spikes and plasma from the soldiers behind them. Thar was cut down, falling to the ground in a pool of his own blood as Drail turned his rifle on her.

"You should have stayed at home," He said, pulling the trigger as she cloaked herself. Lei jumped away, rolling to one side as she heard the familiar sound of a human weapon firing. Drail's expression became one of surprise; the Ung'goy behind him falling like beetles before a chemical spray as the form of an ODST emerged, firing its gun at Lei's former comrades. Drail returned fire, forcing the human to take cover behind a segment of broken wall. "I claim you life in the name of the Great Journey!" he screamed, walking forward and reloading before falling to the ground. Lei gasped as he fell, not having heard any fire to have brought him down.

"Carlos," A human voice screamed from the door of the lift. "Are you still alive?" it questioned, the sound of the human reloading its weapon echoing forth. Lei looked down the street, finding the other human trapped beneath the corpse of a Jiralhanae. She hurried over to one of her saviors, pulling the brute off him and picking him up by the back of his armor. The human kicked and punched Lei in her chest, her armor absorbing the majority of his force. She grabbed his fist with her free hand, causing him to freeze. She lifted a finger to her helmet, a gesture she had seen many humans use before to tell them to be silent. "Carlos?" The human in the lift said, coming out of the room and stopping in his tracks. Lei turned toward him, holding his friend by his armor.

"Human," she said, taking on the kindest tone she could muster for her former enemy. "I thank you for saving my life," She bowed slightly to him, letting his friend go. "I have suspected the Jiralhanae of subterfuge since my arrival to Tranquility, but I could not plea my case to the prophets. I assure you that if you happen across any of my comrades, you shall not be harmed." She bowed once more, saluting him in her fashion before cloaking and running off to find any other Sangheilli.

However, everywhere she went, around every corner and down every road, bodies of her kind littered the street. She could tell that they had been slain from behind, very few laying on their backs, and even fewer showed the signs that a human had killed them. Each body, be it Human or Sangheilli, had either the burns from plasma or brute weaponry, every other one having a cluster of Brute spikes protruding from their bodies. "This cannot be," she said, continuing her search but only being met with death. "How could they do this?" She asked no one, trying to find another of her kind alive. She ran along the roads and alleys, dodging Brute's and even Kig'yar sentries out of fear for her own life. She turned down an alley, moving into a building to hide from a patrol that she had spotted. She hid behind the doorframe, hoping they would not catch her shimmer. The three Brutes and seven grunts continued on their way, having failed to

notice her. Lei exhaled her pent up breath, sliding against the wall to sit on her haunches as she thought of a way to give word to the Prophets of the Brutes treachery.

"How am I going to tell them before they slay them as well," she asked herself, looking around the room to try and find a place to hide until dark. She knew that during the day, even cloaked, she would be easier spotted than at night. Moving unseen was her specialty, but she worked best at night, especially when so many sets of eyes were looking for her. "I suppose I should rest," she said quietly, determination having failed her and the words sounding more like a prayer. Lei climbed a set of stairs in the building, searching for a secluded space when something caught her eye. Against the wall, seemingly asleep on his feet was her friend Lofei, his silver armor shining slightly in the light. "Lofei!" she exclaimed, running into the room and wrapping her arms around him. "I am so glad I found you before theyâ€¦" she stopped as she felt something running down her arm, noticing now that Lofei felt cold. "No," she said, tears choking in her throat. "No, not you. You cannot be deadâ€¦" Lei let a single tear fall from its precarious position, crying silently into the shoulder of her friends corpse.

Wow, dark.

Anywho I thought that, while I was at the subject of rewriting an old story, I would take up a monthly challenge from someone. this is the first chapter of the challenge from _shadow juubi overlord. whattaya think guys? Reviews needed._

2. Chapter 2

****0400, 2558, October 6****th****, EARTH TIME.****

****Location: Botanical Garden in the West Quarter of the capitol of Tranquility****

****Sangheilli Special Operations Domo Lei 'Zamamee****

****Statusâ€¦| Questionableâ€¦|****

Lei walked out of a copse of trees in the west quarter of the Forerunner city, a human shovel in her hand and tears staining her unprotected cheeks. "Farewell Lofei," she mumbled through sobs, dropping the shovel on the corpse of the human it belonged to. "You were a good friend, and could have been much more." She continued to walk through the small park she had buried Lofei in, the starlit sky overhead illuminating her path through her tear filled eyes. She had carried the Major Domo's body through the streets a few hours earlier, dodging Brute patrols and Jackal sentries the whole while until she reached the western botanical gardens. As far as she could tell, her former allies had not entered the area; some even choosing to avoid the area.

Lei stopped near an alley that would lead her farther north, hoping to find a ship back to Moral's cruiser. She picked her helmet off a bench, turning and holding the piece between her hands as she paid homage to her fallen friend. She prayed to the Gods that he would be accepted in the afterlife with a hero's welcome. She prayed that he would know happiness in death, and that he could avenge his honor in

the battle courts. She raised her head after she was finished, sliding the helmet over her head and slipping into the shadows, her cloak activated and turning her into a phantom.

0400 hours, 2558, October 6**th****, EARTH TIME**

Location: Crash site of Pelican Drop ship Gamma 734.

Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie â€" UNSC ODST

Status... Operationalâ€|

"Heavy," Iceman said as he walked by a dead ODST. "Sarge," he said again, passing another corpse. "And Ghost," he stopped before the last one, crouching and taking the dead soldier's ammo and grenades. She sighed, rolling the ODST over and taking choice supplies from his med-pack. "This whole operation went from tactical investigation to hammered shit quick," he looked over to Carlos, finding the teammate scavenging what he could as well. "How did this happen?" he asked half sarcastically, knowing how but not completely sure. Carlos shrugged, pulling Heavy over onto his stomach and removing his bandoliers with mild difficulty.

"We didn't scan in our haste to be the first on the ground," he said simply, tossing Iceman a canister of Biofoam and a packet of burn jelly. "If we had we could have taken the Covenant out with relative ease from the air with snipers in pelicans and Falcons before we dropped ground pounders." Iceman sighed and shook his head, opening the chest pocket on his sergeant and removing a single dog tag. "Completely FUBAR Fred," Carlos said. "I would consider myself a fool if I said we should hide out until pick-up arrives. I'm sure it isn't coming for at least a month." Iceman nodded, taking a tag from Heavy's pockets.

"Well," he said standing and holding the three dog tags in his palm. "I suppose we should make our way out of the city." He closed his hand, stuffing the tags in a pocket and picking up the XSRS99-S5 and MA5C he had scavenged from his fallen team and placing them in the clamps on his back. "Even if we can take every MRE from every dead marine in the place, we wouldn't have enough to remain combat effective past two months. At least out there we could survive on plants and animals." Carlos nodded, securing his new M7S and BR55-S and checking his rounds in his shotgun. "Come on, let's move. Double time," Iceman raised his M7S and jogged toward the alley they had entered the square through.

0500 hours, 2558, October 6**th****, EARTH TIME**

Location: West Gate of Tranquility Capitol

Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie â€" UNSC ODST

Statusâ€| Operationalâ€|

"Stay sharp," Iceman said as he monitored the buildings inside the walls with his iron-sights. "We aren't out of the woods yet." Geiger was about four feet behind him, keeping an eye on their rear flank for a random patrol.

"You don't have to tell me twice," Carlos replied, keeping his

silenced weapon ready and his red dot trained on every floating speck of dust. "It would really fuck up my day to have a burst of plasma hit me in the ass." He looked to his right, thinking he had seen something but finding nothing. "Although those cloaking Elites can really screw with your mental state after running across them once," He looked back at Iceman, getting a nod before returning to his watch.

"Hua," Iceman agreed, having been catching glimpses out of the corners of his eyes of motion for the last hour. "I never want to run across one of those again in my life," he looked around slowly, cornering around the gate out of the city and checking the brush that surrounded the wall. "Double time Carlos," he said. "We're almost out of here, come on." Iceman jogged to the tree line, ducking down behind a trunk and using the undergrowth as cover. "Carlos, where are you?" he called on the radio, looking around the tree and finding nothing. "Carlos?"

"Uh, Fred," Carlos' voice said above him. Iceman looked up, letting his weapon hang loose as what he saw sank in. "I think we have a stalker," Carlos said, hanging in mid air and waving at his teammate below. Iceman sighed, looking directly behind his suspended friend and catching shimmers of a cloaking field.

"Show yourself," Iceman said, letting the Elite know he had seen them. "If you wanted us dead we would already be that way, so you can let him go and turn off your cloak." Iceman was surprised to have his orders met in a well order. Carlos fell the eight feet to the ground, catching himself as he landed. Next, a plume of dust rose behind the five foot seven soldier, a seven foot tall Elite materializing in the midst of the dust. "You again, eh," Iceman said, holstering his M7 but keeping a hand on the grip.

"Yes human," the Elite said, its high-pitched voice still causing the spark of curiosity to rise within Iceman. "It is I," The elite removed its helmet, the rigid model giving way to reveal something Iceman was not used to. The Elite held, even to him, an air of elegance and beauty. Unlike the other Elite's he had seen, this one had more slender features, its face being more slim and appealing to behold. Its mandibles were closed, forming a more human like mouth from having some skin beneath its chin. "Our former introductions were rather hastened. May I be the first to offer a treatise; I am Lei `Zamamee." the elite placed its hand over its chest, bowing slightly.

"Treatiseâ€¦ rightâ€¦" Iceman mumbled, rolling his eyes inside his helmet. "I'm Iceman, this is Geiger," he pointed to Carlos, letting the ODST wave curtly. "And this is my girlfriend," he tapped his M7 affectionately. "And she doesn't like you very much." Lei cocked what Iceman took as a brow.

"You court a weapon?" Lei asked honestly, causing Carlos to snort and chuckle. Iceman shook his head, half-laughing. "What is the humor here," Lei asked further. "Did someone make a joke?"

"No," Iceman said, now half bent over and waving his hands as he laughed. "Nothing, there is no joke." He placed his hands on his knees, regaining his composure before continuing. "I didn't mean the girlfriend thing like that. No I am not dating my gun." He stood back up, leaning on a tree. Carlos sat down, still giggling as Lei simply

switched keys between them, wanting to know why they were laughing.

'I offer them peace and they laugh at me,' she thought, narrowing her eyes. "Do you understand what I am offering?" she asked, receiving nods.

"Yes," Carlos said. "You are tempting us with peace so you can shoot us in the back with plasma or stab us with one of those swords when we are no longer useful to you." Lei snapped her vision to the seated soldier, her mouth hanging open in shock. "We've heard the stories before. One of your kind are stranded and needs help against some form of overwhelming odds, asks a human for help, they help you and then they get killed before one sniper takes you out." Lei gasped and stepped back.

"I would never," she began, taking on a stern look toward the smaller soldier. "You accuse me of attempting to use you like some pack animal! I will not stand for this!" Lei grabbed Carlos by his armor and pulled him to his feet.

"Then feel free to have a seat," Carlos sniped, giggling inside his helmet as Lei stared back at her own reflection. Iceman fell out at this comment, rolling over and slapping the ground as the Elite blushed. "Or lay down if you want. It would make it easier to take pictures for the kids back home of a dead alien." Lei frowned harder, opening her maw and roaring at the ODS. The two went silent as her temper flared.

"If you want to photograph my dead brothers and sisters, feel free to walk right into the streets of that city!" Lei screamed. She shook Carlos, slapping him upside the head. "You have no idea what kind of pain I have to endure to ask you for help, but I have no choice! The Jiralhanae have turned on my kind, having shot them down from behind without provocation! I have no one but you to ask left, not even my closest friend! Which I might add that I buried just an hour ago!" She shook Carlos again, this time refusing to stop until she felt something touch her arm. She looked down to find Iceman's hand over hers.

"Hey, calm down," he demanded, though not too unkind. "Put the Mexican down and have a seat, please. You aren't alone in being alone. We lost people today too." Iceman grasped her wrist and lifted slightly, Lei letting go of Carlos and sitting down quickly, dust billowing out from around her as Carlos fell back to the ground. Lei looked up to find Iceman hovering over his friend, a fist raised in aggression. "What the hell were you thinking," he demanded, Geiger raising his hands to ward off another blow.

"Calm down Gingerbread," He sniped. "I thought the objective was to cause Elites to attack us if they wouldn't." Iceman punched him in the crook of his arm, knocking the wind out of the soldier from the unprotected area.

"Shut up," He yelled as the soldier bent over and gasped for air. Carlos worked his thumbs under the edges of his helmet, sliding the item off as the vacuum seal hissed. "You could have fucked up a serious tactical advantage in this Guerilla situation." Carlos coughed twice, gasping once before breathing heavily. "Sit there and bleed while I try and salvage this."

Iceman shook his head, turning around and sitting cross-legged beside Lei. "Sorry about him," he said. "He's a damn good fighter; he just doesn't know when to shut up." Lei nodded slightly. "I don't know how to say this, and I didn't think I ever would, but we could use your help." Iceman looked at the sky, finding the moon on at its zenith. He placed a hand on the back of his neck, massaging it gently. "We need to get somewhere safer. We're too exposed here." HE stood up, holding out a hand to Lei. "Come on, we need to move."

****1045, 2558, October 6****th****, EARTH TIME****

****Location: two miles west of Tranquility Capitol****

****Sangheilli Special Operations Domo Lei Zamamee****

****Statusâ€| Distressed but functional****

Lei had no idea as to why, but the act of courtesy given to her by Iceman had caused her to question her preconceptions. Before now, she had viewed humans as honor less, dirty things. Even so, she had respected their abilities in combat. Nowâ€| she did not know what to think. 'Gods help me,' she thought as she watched the sun begin to rise and fill the area with its bluish light. 'I cannot remember why I chose to fight them.' Since the brute's betrayal, Lei had witnessed the two humans perform acts even other elites Sangheilli shown her. As they had made their way away from the city the trio had encountered several patrols of Brute led grunts. Each time the humans had told her to hang back on account of her lack of weapons, and each time, the two had ambushed the leader and eliminated the grunts without use of a weapon.

Lei looked up toward the sky, focusing on a fading star. "Have I been wrong this whole time?" she asked her gods, hoping this time above all others that they would reply. "Do the humans deserve the wrath we bring upon them, or are the Prophets wrong?" She fidgeted with the human rifle in her hands awkwardly, the handle not fitting as well into her palm as a plasma rifle did. "I need your guidance, Great Ones. I need to know what to do."

"What was that about?" A voice behind her said. Lei spun on her feet, turning to face the unknown being with a rifle barrel. She lowered the weapon reluctantly as she beheld the brown tone of Carlos' skin. The human lifted his tin cup and tapped the barrel of the Assault rifle she held, tilting it away from his face slightly. "You pray?" he asked, raising an eyebrow and giving her an all too charming smile. Lei sighed and turned back around, sitting on her haunches as she looked out over the cliff they had camped on.

"Yes, all Covenant races pray to the Gods," she said. "It aids us in our Journey to our own godhood, even if it only helps to calm us in times of struggle." She looked back at him, raising an eyebrow. "Do humans pray to the Gods?" Carlos raised both eyebrows, taking a drink from his cup before walking up beside her.

"Some do," he said. "But most don't even bother to get involved in religion. It used to be, according to my grandmother, that everyone in the world except the scientists believed in God, no matter what name you called it by. There were Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Taoistsâ€| all kinds of religions with their own gods and

names for them." Carlos reached under the front of his chest plate, pulling out his dog tags and a cross in a long, beaded string. "Iâ€| was raised Catholic, as was all of my family, but I never really believed. I prayed, and it helped sometimes, but when God refused to help me when I was homeless and starving I only became angry." Lei looked down, knowing that her people would become like that someday.

"How can you say that your god helps you, if you don't really believe?" Carlos shrugged, sitting down on the rocks beside her to watch the sunrise.

"Psalms 23," he said, taking another drink. Lei looked at him, silently inquiring for more information. Carlos smiled and gave a huff of laughter. "The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not be in want. He maketh me lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still water. He restores my immortal soul, and leads me in paths of righteousness for his names sake. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, you anointest my brow with oil, my cup overfloweth. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the lord my whole life long." Carlos sighed lightly, finishing his drink and setting his cup down. "It means that no matter what, God will care for you and tend to you, even in death."

Lei looked at the sunrise again, her helmet filtering the light to make the colorful visage bearably lit. The intensity of the heat that reached her from the solar force reminded her of home, of Sanghelios and its dual yellow suns. It reminded her of her younger years, running through the fields of grass and the woods, of getting in trouble and having fun withâ€|

Lei blinked, letting the tear fall. She would mourn him later.

"I have to say that your religion is far more forgiving than the religion I follow," Lei said. "The Covenant dictates that you must live like the gods, for the gods, and aspire to be a god but still follow the gods. You must convert all you meet, or wipe their filth from the holy dominion." She sighed and looked at the ground, laying the rifle at her feet before placing her gaze on Carlos. "Do you think that I am wrong," she asked. "That this disaster has been brought on by the atrocities of destroying planets?" Carlos raised his eyebrows quickly, sucking on his teeth before shrugging.

"Some would say yes, others would say no," he said. "But the one thing I can tell you is that we are fighting you to keep that from happening to us." They both fell silent, the conversation having ended on Carlos' statement. They sat on the cliff edge, watching the city to the west being slowly illuminated by the rising sun.

"You should get some rest," Carlos said, breaking the ten minutes of silence that had shared and causing Lei to start. Carlos smirked as she twitched, jerking his head towards their makeshift camp. "Fred should be awake now. And you've been up all night." He gave her a sideways glance, smiling as she took off her helmet and ran a hand across her face.

"Sleep sounds like a divine suggestion," she said, handing him the AR

and walking toward the camp. "Thank you," she said before rounding a boulder and disappearing from sight.

"Morning," The voice of Iceman said behind Lei as she entered the makeshift camp. Lei turned quickly, her reflexes and instinct causing her to take a stance before realizing she was safe. To her surprise, Iceman was still in full armor; his helmet on and the visor activated, shrouding his features in shadow and only allowing her to see his jaw. "Calm down," he said, shaking his head. "I'm friendly, remember?" Lei relaxed as he spoke, berating herself for letting herself be snuck up on and for nearly killing her ally; even if he was only a temporary one. She nodded to him, standing straight and closing her mandibles to present a more friendly appearance to the human. "How's the city look," he asked, standing from the rock he was seated on and sliding his rifle onto his back.

"It is still occupied, if that is what you mean," she said, walking over to a circle of stones and sitting on a stump beside it. "From what I could see, the brutes have moved pairs of Lekgolo masses to the gates to guard them. Two outside, and presumably two inside. They have also stationed Kig'Yar sentries on the walls and higher structures." She halted, picking up a stick and drawing in the sand inside the circle. She drew in silence as Iceman took in what she had told him, more than likely planning on how to overcome the odds. She fell in on her mind, watching her memories play rather than what she was drawing.

"How about the space between us," Iceman asked, drawing her from her thoughts and back to reality. Lei blinked, her nictitating membranes flashing twice before she looked back at him. "No man's land," he said, pointing behind himself with his thumb. "Have they moved into it?" Lei shook her head slightly, shrugging quickly afterward. She returned her focus to the sand, blinking at what she found.

Traced into the sand was the forerunner symbol Reclaimer; a circle with a spike descending from the bottom flanked by two buds on either side of the spike. "I didn't see anything there," she said, distracted by her own thoughts. "But they could be in the trees or simply using cloaking devices. Our equipment isn't all that difficult to force fit to a Chieftain's armor." Lei stood, stepping into the circle and twisting her foot slightly before continuing to the other side and into the shade a large outcrop provided. She didn't know if the humans could read the glyphs of the Forerunner, but she didn't want him to see it either way. "Is your helmet melded to the remainder of your suit?" she asked bluntly.

"No," Iceman said, drawing the syllable out to emphasize his confusion. "Why do you ask?" Lei shrugged, leaning on the wall of stone and placing the flat of a foot against it.

"Because you haven't removed it since you landed I assume," she said. "Does it not irritate you skin or get uncomfortable?" Iceman shook his head, laughing slightly as he placed his hands on his hips and rested his weight on his right leg.

"You want to see my face, don't you," he asked, Lei simply raising a hand slightly to keep from giving an answer. He took his hands from his hips, returning to a stable stance before grasping the jaw line of the item. Lei watched closely as he slid his thumbs into two grooves under the rim, the sound of hissing air coming from where it

melded with his neck before sliding the helmet from his head. "Wish granted princess," he said, smirking slight as she stared at him.

From her previous experience with human features, this one was quite pale. His eyes were a very eerie blue, glowing almost and held an intensity that bespoke of an indeterable focus. His cheeks seemed high on his face, but not nearly as much as Carlos' and his hair was a very bright gold. He seemed a little less restricted than Carlos did though, his hair longer and his face peppered with short hairs that were a shade darker than what was on his head. "Like what you see?" he asked, the joke heavy in his tone. In full honesty, Lei liked the way he looked, the human before her being the only one she had seen that didn't look like a dumb animal; but she wasn't going to let him know.

"It isn't exactly revolting," she said, smiling inwardly as his ego took a visible blow. "But you are more appealing than the others of your kind I have seen." Iceman raised his eyebrows, twitching his head slightly and sniffing before smirking at her. Lei felt the blood fill her cheeks and mandibles as he gave her a slightly crazed and sensual look, the human smiling in full as he noticed he had met his goal.

"And lie number one has been debunked," he said, setting his helmet down on a stone and sitting down beside it. Lei huffed; embarrassed that the human had caused her to think of him in that light no matter how quickly it ended. "Aw lighten up Sammie," he said, the pair of humans having nick named her that. "I have that effect on every woman. It sends a chill of fear and intrigue up their spines every time." He pointed to the tents that were hidden under the outcrop, letting his arm fall and rest on his leg. "Go hit the rack. You could use the rest." He gave her a slight smile, Lei knowing it was to make her more comfortable, and stood up. "I'm going to go and find out what's edible here. The rations we have won't last too long," he picked up his helmet, about to put it on but stopping and turning around. "Uhâ€| what do you eat?"

Lei laughed at his question, reaching into a hard case on her thigh and withdrawing a small device. "You put the plant or flesh in here," she said, pointing to a tray on the side. "Push it in and press this button." Lei picked a blade of grass from beside her foot, placing it in the tray and starting the analysis. The device flashed green. "That means it is edible. Even though I doubt I would eat it." she opened the tray and dumped the grass out, closing it and throwing it to Iceman. "Kill something for me, will you?" she asked, Iceman nodding and placing the device in a pocket.

****1300, 2558, October 6****th****, EARTH TIME****

****Location: two miles west of Tranquility Capitol****

****Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie, UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper****

****Status: Operationalâ€|****

Iceman stalked through the forest that lined the north edge of their camp, the tall coniferous trees filtering the blue light the sun gave off to radiate a greenish tinge around the dead orange needles that

blanketed the ground. He held an MA5C in his hands, a silencer attached; tracking a birdlike creature he had spotted from camp the night before. Already he had gathered edible fruits and nuts he had found around the area, the five pounds of food seated uncomfortably on his back in a makeshift pack, and was now hunting for the fat and protein rich meat that he knew they wouldn't last long without.

"Ice," His radio chirped into his ear, the HUD on his visor displaying the call as Carlos. "What's keeping you?" Iceman looked around the area, making sure nothing was in sight before crouching beside a fallen tree.

"Trying to score us some meat," he said, activating his radio with a thought and looking over the dead tree to make sure the tracks were on the other side. "I spotted something like a Moa from Reach before I left camp. But the damn thing's elusive as hell." Iceman looked over the tree again, catching a flash of slightly florescent feathers in the trees a hundred yards ahead.

"A Moa," Carlos questioned. "Those things tasted horrible unless you could get them from Alexandria's Fried Foods. Why are you chasing something like that?" Iceman rolled his eyes, looking over the tree once more and finding three of the creatures standing together, pecking at the ground.

"Our friend asked me to bring her something back," he said, deciding he was done with the conversation. "Now I have to kill this bird, we can argue when I get back. Make sure the kids are in bed." With that, he cut the line, slowly resting the fore grip of his rifle on the log and loading a magazine of Stun rounds and slowly closing the action so the birds wouldn't be alerted. He took aim on the center bird, placing the reticule on his visor in the center of the bird's chest. 'Don't want to kill you if I can't eat you,' he thought, squeezing the trigger and being rewarded with a slight chirping noise and a puff of white fog.

The bird squawked loudly, scarring the other two off before taking two long strides and falling over onto its side. Iceman quickly mounted the log, landing on the other side and running over to the stunned bird and drawing his knife. "Calm down you dumb beast," he said, cutting the birds neck enough to get a drop of blood. "You aren't food yet." He held the knife over the scanner, the fluid dropping onto the tray and the light flashing green. He stowed the device in a pocket, quickly running his knife over the bird's neck with enough force to separate the vertebrae. The bird's body jerked twice, the legs slowly contracting repeatedly as Iceman tied cords around them and tossed spools into the branches of a tree. "But now you are," he mused as the spools came back down onto the ground, Iceman hauling the bird up to drain it.

1345, 2558, October 6**th****, Earth time**

Location: Established camp two miles west of Tranquility capitol

Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie. UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper.

Status: Fatiguedâ€|

"Hey!" Iceman yelled as he trudged toward the camp, the two hundred pound bird in tow behind him. "Can I get a hand with this?" Lei materialized next to him, causing him to jump and drop the ropes he was holding. "Jesus Christ," He muttered, pointing a finger at her. "You shouldn't do that to people; it could give them a heart attack." Lei giggled at his surprise, picking the bird up by the neck and legs in a fireman's carry.

Ok, second chapter! Please give me your reviews, I need them lol.

3. Chapter 3

1700, October 6**th****, Earth Time**

Location: Established camp two miles west of Tranquility capitol

Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie. UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper.

**Status: Operational **

"That tasted horrible," Carlos said, laying back on the grass, basking in the midday sun with his eyes closed and a bone shard held in his mouth like a toothpick. He cracked open an eye, looking at Lei and Iceman as they laughed at him. "What?" he asked defensively.

"You ate the largest portion ya damn wetback," Iceman said jokingly, finishing his last morsel of the bird with a disgusted face. "But it is pretty nastyâ€|" He gave a mock gag, exaggerating the bitter tasting meats effect. Lei giggled, carving a slice off the breast of the bird with Iceman's knife before slurping it up.

"I don't know," she said, chewing it slightly before swallowing the strip of flesh. "I kind of like it." Carlos and Fred gave her strange expressions as she continued to eat from the roasted animal.

"What the hell," Carlos said, sitting up and pulling a large strip from the cooked bird. "I'm still hungry," Iceman shook his head, standing up and shouldering his rifle. "Where are you going?" Carlos asked, taking another bite and grimacing. Iceman shrugged pointing over the hilltop to the east.

"Get some Intel," he said. "There are a few crash sites in that city that have supplies we need like ammo. Hopefully there's one that isn't crawling with Covenant." Lei nodded, standing up and walking up to him.

"I'll go too," she said, taking the offered weapon. "You need someone to watch your rear flank." Carlos looked at her before pointing an accusing finger.

"Why you," he questioned. "I could do it. Why do you really want to go?" Lei blew his question off, heading out to the east hill. Iceman looked back at him, holding out a hand. "Fineâ€| here." Carlos handed Fred his helmet, pulling another piece off the bird and chewing on it

slightly longer than necessary. "You know, the more I eat of this the better it tastes" He chuckled as Iceman shook his head, the soldier walking off to leave him alone.

Iceman caught up to Lei quickly, the Elite walking at a rather slow pace. She seemed to refuse to look up, instead staring at the ground six feet before her, her expression seeming depressed even to Iceman. "What's on your mind Sammie?" He asked, tapping her on the shoulder to draw her attention from the violet colored grass. She shook her head; fidgeting with the handle of the rifle she had been given.

"It's nothing," she lied, knowing also that he would see straight through it. However, to her surprise, Iceman simply nodded, patting her on the shoulder lightly before striding ahead several feet. 'Does he not care,' she thought, catching up to him quickly. 'Or does he respect my choice?' She decided to find out, tapping him on the shoulder slightly. "In my society, persons who get that response pry for the real problem." Iceman chuckled, smiling and stopping on the hilltop.

"Yeah and in my experience when a soldier says that, it means they want some space to be alone in," He pointed out over the distance, indicating to the no-man's-land between them and the city. "They've moved in." Lei looked out, following his direction to find Wraiths and Ghosts nearly a quarter mile from the city walls. Further out there was a line of Shade turrets, followed by a small wing of Revenant strike craft at the half-mile point. Running sortie above the Revenant's were nearly twenty Banshees, possibly keeping a watch for any humans that missed the city or any Sangheilli that had escaped.

"Can they see us from that distance," Lei asked, unsure how well the Brutes could use her people's tech. Iceman shrugged, donning his helmet and turning around.

"Carlos, Iceman, Call back." He stood with his sub-machinegun in his hand, leaning his weight on his right leg. "Yeah, listen, break camp and head North West. Take your tent and your ruck; we'll pick up the rest." He paused, Lei looking up toward the banshees and using her HUD to zoom on the craft. "Our new neighbors don't know how to respect our property lines. Just get your shit and go. Do not stop before five miles, and activate your short-range transponder when you find a defensible location. I want you alive, so keep it below a mile radius." Iceman turned back around, finding Lei sitting on her haunches like a dog, watching the Banshee's circle above. "Hey," he kicked a pebble, the rock catching her on the shoulder pad and drawing her attention. "You want to help me get in there?" Lei scoffed, gesturing with her palm up.

"If you want to get us both killed," She said as she returned her view to the walls. "Sure." Iceman laughed slightly, pulling his helmet back off and crouching beside her.

"Couldn't be that hard," he said, pointing to the north wall. "They don't seem to have much resistance in that area now." Lei looked at the identified section knowing why they had moved out of it.

"It's residential," she said, adding up the numbers in her head. "It shouldn't have too many that we couldn't make our way around them,

but I doubt there is anything of worth there. Mostly metal bed frames, some deteriorating furniture, maybe a vehicle repair depot with no contents." Iceman handed her a tablet, letting her view over the map.

"The UNSC sent detailed maps from orbital scans," he said, tapping the screen and moving the map location. "During the drop, a Pelican went down due to thruster malfunction. It dropped out of the sky like a brick, no survivors," He zoomed the area in slightly, showing the craft in question. "But there was no damage to the cargo. It had ammunition, rations, medical supplies and a vehicle capable of carrying three." Lei looked over the area of city surrounding the crash site. The walls to the northeast of the site were taller than the rest, because of uneven terrain, but she thought she could seeâ€|

"Here," she said, pointing to a patch of shadowed wall. "If these were taken at noon that indicates there is a breach we can access; lending that the Brutes hadn't sent the Engineers in to seal the gap." Iceman nodded, taking the tablet Lei handed him and stowing it in his chest compartment. "So when do you want to go?" She asked. Iceman wobbled his head as he thought, looking at the sun before checking the clock on his visor.

"Sun down sounds good for me," he got a nod from Lei, the Elite deciding that her cloak would work better then as well. Iceman sighed, taking his helmet off and laying on the hillside. "I guess we have some free time," he said, popping the lock on his chest plate open and sliding it off.

"Why are you disrobing," Lei asked as he propped his head up with his hands slightly. Iceman cracked an eyes open, looking up at her into the sun.

"Because I'm attempting to sleep until dusk," he informed. "It's the best way I know to pass time, and the armor is uncomfortable to sleep in; leaves my joints stiff when I get up." He sat up, removing the sleeves of plates from his arms and legs, finally removing the groin plate and setting it in a neat pile next to him. He donned his helmet, depolarizing the visor and looking at her. "Care to join me?" He patted the ground next to him, polarizing the screen and working his hands back under the helmet. Lei chuckled, thinking the human looked rather defenseless without his armor.

****0545, October 7****th****, Earth Time****

****Location: Outer perimeter of Tranquility Capitol****

****Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie. UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper.****

****Special Operations Domo Lei 'Zamamee.****

****Status: Operational****

Nightfall brought Lei and Iceman to the wall of the city, the two working their way through the dense temperate forest that lined it. The two would stalk through the underbrush, staying as silent as possible, scanning the area high and low for both hostile soldiers and traps. As they neared the confirmed breach, they halted, staying

hidden behind several large fern-like plants. "Hold," Lei said as Iceman began to rise from cover, stopping him with an outstretched arm and pushing him back down. "Something's nearby." She looked around, her HUD compass reeling as she tried to pinpoint the contact.

"How do you know that," Iceman asked over the two-way radio they had set up, having turned off his external speakers when they had set out. "I can't hear anything." Lei held up a hand, silencing him before motioning for him to move through the breach. Iceman jumped from cover, sprinting the hundred-yard distance and into the walls, diving behind a raised plant bed. Lei waited a second after he disappeared behind the walls, following him when the coast remained clear, sliding behind the bed next to him. She rose to a crouch, silently shouldering the silenced rifle she had been given and firing on a group of grunts that were asleep on the benches nearby. The targets fell under her sustained fire, the quiet put of her rifle silencing as she dropped the magazine from the breach. She gave a rally signal, Iceman closing on her position as she slammed another thirty-two rounds home in the MA5C. She gestured over her eyes, palm held down before swirling her fingers skyward. Iceman nodded, handing her the tablet with the map activated. Lei placed a marker on the position where the grunts now lay dead, highlighting it as high threat for their return.

"I'm going to scout the area," she whispered, Iceman's enhanced microphone picking up the slight sound. "If there are more forces in the area I will mark them on the map and update your information. I can't say I will be able to take them all out, so when I do you need to cross check your position to theirs." He nodded giving a series of signals to inform her he was moving toward the objective. She nodded, activating her cloak and leaving.

Iceman stayed crouched behind the plant bed, activating his VISR and checking the relay between him and her datapad was active. Confirming this, he stood halfway, stalking off to the west, homing in on the nav beacon he had placed. He made his way through alleyways and side streets, avoiding any possible contacts. He was making good progress, having closed half the distance before his map updated the position of an enemy that was dangerously close, causing him to take cover. He waited in silence, seconds feeling like agonizing hours as the targets crept closer. Within half a minute, he could hear the chatter of a Brute, the heavy footfalls signifying there were two of them. His current weapons payload would not suffice for killing them quickly, the silenced pistol and SMG having a notorious reputation for doing less than nothing to them. He readied his knife, slowly pulling the half foot of titanium blade from the scabbard on his chest as one of them entered his view. Another followed quickly, gesturing and talking in its native tongue before the former nodded and walked ahead. The latter turned and walked up to a wall, the sound of falling water reaching him before the smell of ammonia and sulfur overpowered his helmets filters and reached his nose.

'Seriously,' he thought in disbelief. 'He's taking a pissâ€¦' Iceman crawled out of cover, turning the knife in his palm so the blade was down, rising to a crouch before grabbing the edge of the Brutes chest plate, pulling him down with his own weight and shoving the point of the weapon into its eye socket. The monster shuddered a few time, a slight gurgling escaping its mouth past Iceman's hand. The other

Brute looked back, grumbling something before stopping as he beheld Iceman with a knife shoved into his comrade's skull. He growled, raising his Spike Rifle before a glow appeared in his left eye. The Brute shook once, a wet sigh escaping his throat as he fell to his knees. The Brute's limp body sat there, lifeless, on its haunches as Lei de-cloaked, a plasma dagger retracting into her vambrace.

"I've waited for that," she said, placing a foot on the Brute's neck and pushing it to the ground. "I've waited too long for that," She walked over the dead Brute, stomping its skull and sending a fountain of brain matter and blood out either side of its once complete skull, a pleased and all too psychotic moan issuing from her throat as she twisted her foot and ground the bone fragments into the pavement. If iceman did not know better, and he didn't, he would have said she had just had an orgasm from killing the brute. "Are you alright," she asked, getting a nod from Iceman. "Good. Keep going," Iceman nodded, sheathing his knife and shouldering his SMG before moving out of the alley. Lei walked up to the brute Iceman had killed, prying its mouth open and pulling a fang out. She turned the bloody tooth around, inspecting it for any damages before placing it in a compartment on her armor. 'Maybe he's different from the others,' she thought, standing and cloaking again.

Iceman wove his way through the now narrow sidewalks between buildings, taking pains to move quickly and silently, as far from any enemy patrols as he could as he neared the objective. He rounded a corner, finding the crash site of Pelican Gamma 124. He scanned the area, searching for covenant before slowly stalking from cover. He inched closer, staying alert, his external microphone turned up to catch the slightest sound. He stopped next to the black craft; blending as well as he could with the metal as he inspected it. The pilot's bubble was cracked; blood covering half of it, the pilot's corpse leaned over the controls, his helmet having cracked the glass. The metal on the sides was scored and torn, the impact having split the plating as it dropped into the square. One of the landing supports was down, possibly the pilot's last attempt to save the passengers, the other jammed up through the wing. Iceman stalked toward the back, the bay open by a foot at the top. He made another scan, finding nothing in the area, before holstering his weapon. He jumped, latching onto the bay door and pulling with his weight. The door budged, slightly, the opening widening by another foot. He pulled again, his feet dangling a foot above the ground. "Open!" he said, pulling himself up and dropping. "Open!" He repeated the process, making no ground. "Why won't you fucking open?" He fell into a fit of pulling, dropping and yanking against the metal door, succeeding in only making a loud noise and frustrating himself.

"What are you doing?" He heard behind himself, Iceman looking over his shoulder to see Lei standing with a hand on her hip. He sighed, letting go of the door and dropping to the ground. He took off his helmet, holding the item loosely in his hand while gesturing with the other to the pelican bay door.

"The hydraulic system is locked in place," He said, making his best guess as to the root of his frustration. "And since I don't have to tools or luxury of time and safety, I can't open it." Lei smirked inside her helmet, handing him her rifle and grasping the edge of the bay door. She tensed, pulling on the door with increasing force until the metal gave a light creak; sounding like an explosion in the

silence of the city. The door began to lower, slowly at first, but the gap widening faster until it was four feet above the ground. Lei huffed, panting from the exertion. Iceman looked from Lei to the door and back, patting her on the back. "Remind me not to piss you off," he said, getting a laugh from her before climbing into the craft.

Just as the manifest had said, the ship was laden with crates and cases, labels ranging from food to rifles and ammo filling the compartments. The boxes and metal cases and tubes surrounded a Warthog, packed in close to the vehicle to keep it from shifting during flight. He went to work, finding a piece of metal to pry the boxes open with and popping the top on a crate of MREs. He reached in, pulling out a wrapped and dehydrated Neapolitan ice cream bar, opening the foil wrapper and taking a bite of the dry treat. He sighed as the sugar hit his taste buds, swallowing the bite and holding the food in his teeth as he opened more boxes. He found out as he moved further in that the shipment was more than just food and supplies. Halfway in the cargo changed from ammo, weapons and rations to tech, specifically science and logistics tech. He pulled out a wrist mounted computer device, attaching it to his arm and running a cord to his battery bank. The device lit up, running a diagnostic and asking for a verification code. Iceman frowned, taking the item off and throwing it back in its box. 'And I almost had a cool little armor tweak,' he thought, closing the box back and checking the hog. The vehicle was fully fueled, the water reserve also filled to capacity, and the turret mounted Light Anti-Aircraft Gun, or LAAG, was fully stocked with armor piercing rounds; loaded and cocked to fire.

He was about to open another box when he heard a sound he had hoped he would not have to. He put on his helmet, shouldering his weapon before pressing against the side of the bay. He peeked around the jammed landing strut, finding Lei bent over behind the Pelican, a hand over her stomach and violet blood in a puddle around her. "Psst!" he said, getting her attention. He twitched his head toward the square, lei pointing on the other side of the craft, high. Iceman looked out slightly, finding a Jackal with a beam rifle aimed toward them on a roof. Iceman ducked inside quickly, a streak of blue light striking the half open door and bouncing off. 'Shit that was close,' he thought, checking his VISR information for the Jackal's location. He checked the distance and angle, steeling himself and ducking from cover long enough to send sixty rounds at the target, Violet-blue blood spraying from the thirty-plus wounds it now owned.

Iceman sighed in relief, glad he had not taken the Jackal's next round, dropping the magazine from his weapon and loading another before exiting the Pelican. "Where are you hit," He asked in as concerned a voice as the situation would allow, dropping into a kneel beside Lei and placing a hand on her back. She grunted once, pulling her hand away from her stomach, revealing a singed hole in the outer muscles of the left side of her abdomen.

"It goes deeper than it seems," she said through the pain, whimpering quietly as the air hit the wound. "I'm bleeding internally..." She sat down, leaning back against the Pelican. "It's only a matter of time before I die of blood loss..." She removed her helmet, laying the streamlined piece aside.

"No need for all that melodrama," Iceman said, getting up and

reaching into the Pelican's bay area. He reappeared holding a green container, a foot long and looking like a large grenade. He knelt in front of her, pulling up on the large clip at the front. "It's Bio-foam," he said, moving her hand away and placing the tip of the nozzle in the wound. "It should stop the bleeding long enough for me to find some medical supplies and a safe place to stitch you up," He depressed the trigger, the foam spraying into Lei's stomach, Iceman stopping when he could see the foam beginning to spill out. Lei sighed as the foams mild anesthetic qualities began to take effect, numbing the pain and giving her a nice buzz.

"And where would you do that," She asked in a rather stoic demeanor, sighing as she spoke as the pain ebbed. "My honor is already lost, just leave me be." She set a determined face, devout to her cultural ways in the most entrenched dogma. Iceman climbed back into the pelican, returning with a larger pack that reached his knees, presumably containing more than he had arrived with.

"No," he said, crouching and slipping her right arm over his shoulders. "That's not how humans operate, you know that." He lifted with his legs, bringing her to her feet and starting to walk toward a building. "You're lucky it wasn't a needle round," he said. "I can't fix that in the field, and Bio-Foam doesn't stop it from killing you." Lei took her arm off his shoulder, pushing him away and extending her plasma daggers, glaring at him.

"You will not cause me to lose any more honor," she snarled, striking a defensive pose. "I have already lost much, and you would force me to lose more by surviving a fatal wound!" Iceman held his hands up, backing up a step.

"Whoa, hey! What are you talking about," He took a few steps forward, stopping when Lei lifted the arcing blades higher to strike. "Why wouldn't you want to live?" She growled lowering her arms and standing at full height.

"You human's wouldn't understand," she said, turning away from him and staring at the dual moons of Tranquility. "The spilling of one's own blood is the most dishonorable thing my kind can do, and the only doctors we have are those who operate to save children so they may gain their honor. The Brutes are like you in this, saving their own from death when it is better to simply die with whatever honor one has left." Iceman scoffed in disbelief, taking off his helmet and walking up behind her.

"Why would you do that," he asked incredulously. "Why would you rather maintain some sense of honorable death because you have lost some because you got shot?" Lei shook her head, looking down the street as a night bird flew by an intersection. "Hey," he grabbed her shoulder, turning her around to look him in the eyes. "Do you think I am without honor?" Lei shook her head again, looking away from him before having her vision redirected by Iceman shaking her slightly. "Then let me help you," he said with emphasis, pausing between each word. "I've been shot by your former allies for three years. I've got plasma scars on my legs and back from the little fuckers and one on my chest from the same thing that got you." He let her go, turning toward the building he had originally chosen and taking a step forward. "So are you still going to complain about your honor or are you going to get revenge on the bastards that betrayed you?"

0700 hours, October 7**th****, Earth Time.**

Location: Residential Building 1222 of Tranquility Capitol City.

Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie. UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper.

Status: Operational

Special Operations Domo Lei 'Zamamee.

Status: Woundedâ€| Injury controlled.

"Clear," Iceman said, walking into the penthouse room of the building, M7S raised and scanning the shadowed areas he couldn't see from the doorway. Lei walked in, finding a large bed in the center of the room, the mattress in nearly pristine condition, save for a few chunks missing from the foam. "It seems that we are alone in here," Iceman said, walking back to the door and closing the sliding panels as lei sat on the bare mattress. He took off his pack, pulling out several sets of white sheets, large enough to wrap around the seven foot by seven-foot mattress twice. "Up," he said simply, walking over and spreading the thick cloth out. "The Bio-foam should clot the bleeding, but I still need to stitch the wound." He placed a couple of pillows on the bed, returning to his pack and rummaging through it. "Undress," he said bluntly, laying several boxes beside the large pack and cinching the top closed. Lei's eyes widened, her mouth hanging open and mandibles separated slightly as her face became bright red.

"What," She asked, nearly screaming the question. "Why would you need me to do that?" Fred huffed, pulling his helmet off and turning quickly.

"It makes sowing you together easier and quicker when I don't have to work around that armor," he said in a cold and methodical voice, removing the emotion it normally held to hide his own embarrassment. Lei swallowed hard, nodding meekly before he turned back around and opened a few of the packs side pockets.

'Calm down Lei, he isn't that sort of male. And besides, it isn't like you would let him do anything other than thatâ€|' She halted, having already removed her armor from her arms legs and had half unlocked her chest plate. 'Would you let him?' she asked herself, unsure if the fluttering feeling in her chest and stomach was the Bio-Foam or her own hidden thoughts resurfacing. She shook her self, steeling her resolve before removing her chest harness and groin plates. He organized them neatly next to the bed, setting them so she could quickly put them on if anything happened.

"Oh godâ€|" Lei heard, turning her head to find Iceman blushing madly, mouth agape and eyes fixed to her. "I-I didn't mean completelyâ€|" he stammered, looking off to the side and down after seeing her cheeks redden. "I o-only needed you to remove the chest harness," He chuckled lightly, coughing and regaining his composure before holding something out to her. "Just umâ€|. Wrap this around your waist pleaseâ€|" He shook the white towel slightly, urging her to take it. "For modesty's sake. There is no need for you to be naked, really, I don't want to see it," His eyes went wide, his mouth

opening and closing as he searched for words. "I didn't mean it like that! Y-you are beautiful! Well, as beautiful as I can find an alien that isâ€¦ I meanâ€¦" Lei giggled girlishly, finding his state of shock and amaze beyond hilarious. "Justâ€¦ Take the towel Sammy, pleaseâ€¦" Lei smirked, knowing this was her chance to get him back for the look he had given her.

"I'm sorry," she said, turning towards him and walking closer than necessary, her hips swaying slightly as she did. "I didn't know, forgive me. It has just been so long since I was able to take off my armor that I just wanted to feel the air on my skinâ€¦" she stroked her chest with the side of a finger, sliding it down between her breasts slowly, making sure he saw her look in his eyes, "For a few minutes, really. The plates tend to be rather uncomfortable, and the designers didn't have well endowed females in mind when they designed it. You understand, don't you?" she gave him a sly, seductive look, taking the offered towel and wrapping it around her waist slowly, tying a knot in the corners and taking her time to play with his base instincts. She stood as she was, hand on her hip and weight on her right leg, the look of lust painted on her face for a few moments before she slowly dropped the act, turning around and returning to the bed.

Iceman sighed quietly, blinking quickly and shaking his head in nervousness. Right now he was glad the groin plate on his armor existed, even more now than when an Innie had missed his knee in a hold up. "Alright," he said calmly, holding up a finger. "I deserved that I guess. Happy with your revenge for yesterday?" Lei nodded, smiling slightly. "Good," Iceman removed a syringe from his pocket, taking the cap off and emptying it of a few air bubbles. "Lay down and I'll give you some anesthetic, then I will get you stitched and wrapped." Lei obliged, laying on the left side of the bed and working her arm under her neck. Iceman walked over and knelt beside her, wiping the area with alcohol and pushing the needle into the muscle wall. Lei cringed, yelping quietly as he plunged the liquid into her abdomen. "Sorry," He said, pulling the needle out and laying it on a table close by.

"It's alrightâ€¦" Lei said dreamily, the end of her word drifting into oblivion as he pupils dilated, the vertical slits becoming large black dishes in a sea of amber. "You humans have some amazing drugsâ€¦" Iceman laughed quietly, pinching the rim of her wound to check if she could still feel it. Her pain reflex failing, he opened a box by his knee, retrieving and opening a wrapped and sterile suture set. "Is that what you're going to fix me with?" she asked her voice far off and her words slurred.

"Yes it is," he replied, pushing her head back onto the pillow and covering her eyes with a hand. "Now you are going to take a vacation to where ever you would like to go, and when you wake up you will be as good as new. If maybe a little nauseous." Lei sighed happily, her eyes closing and was off to her dream get-away within minutes. "Thank god," he said, returning his attention to the wound and the needle in his hand. "Maybe now I can save your ass from infection and septicemia."

****Happy New Years Gais! Yeah, I spent the majority of December finishing January's chapter so I could slack for half a month lol.****

****Anyway, What do you guys think about it? Reviews go in the blue box below the story, and i accept Anonymous Reviews as well, so anything you want to say, say it :D****

4. Chapter 4

****0700 hours, October 8****th****, 2558. Earth Time.****

****Location: Residential Building 1222 of Tranquility Capitol City.****

****Special Operations Domo Lei 'Zamamee.****

****Status: Injured, Healing.****

Lei opened her eyes, staring at the blurry single colored visage before her, thoughts forming in her mind but fading almost as quickly as they began. "Where am I," she asked openly, her mind hazed and voice slurred. She blinked a few times, horizontal eyelids closing an opening, the room becoming clearer as she gripped the sheets around and on top of her. Memories came back like a flood, her training kicking in and causing her to surge into a sit. "Ah!" she cried, clutching her stomach as she pain caused her to remember being shot by a Jackal. She pulled the covers away, removing her hand to find a neat stitching pattern on her side. She touched the sore and reddened patch of skin, remembering that Iceman had stitched her wound the night before. A note was stuck to her wrist, Lei removing the yellow paper and reading the writing. It took her a moment to remember the human alphabet, the words forming in her mind as she rubbed her forearm.

_You are Lei Samameh; you were shot by a Jackal an hour and a half after dark. You are on a Forerunner settled world, betrayed by your covenant and aiding two humans named Fredric "Iceman" Carnegie and Carlos "Geiger" Montoya. You are currently in the top room in a building that overlooks a Pelican crash site that I, Iceman, am currently searching for useful items. I will be back once every hour to check on you. You may be experiencing slight amnesia from the morphine, and the drug can make you nauseous. _

Iceman.

Lei smiled slightly, setting the note aside and looking around the walls. The room was filled with boxes and crates, the walls beside the door stacked from floor to roof with the wooden and metal boxes. 'He's been busy,' she thought, looking out the window to find it still dark or dark yet again. 'How long was I asleep?' she questioned her mind, shivering in the cool room. She looked down, gasping as she beheld her exposed body, quickly grabbing the sheet she was under and wrapping it around herself. Lei placed a hand to her head, trying to regain her calm mental state and ease the confusion she was feeling.

She stood from the bed, holding the makeshift robe above her feet as she moved to a window. Below her was the crashed Pelican, crates littering the ground around it. She could swear that she saw Iceman's helmet on top of one, but her height prevented her from making anything out besides the most distinctive of objects. "You're awake," She heard someone exclaim behind her, Lei turning quickly to find

Iceman standing in the door, a crate tied to his back and helmetless. She nodded slightly, placing a forearm over her chest to hide anything that might show through the sheet. Iceman set the crate down next to the door, reaching into a pocket and pulling out one of the MRE's Lei was becoming frequent to seeing. "Here," he said, holding it out and walking closer. "I found this in the crates, and it's the only one. It's a dehydrated steak dinner; just add water and it will warm up." He took her hand, placing the packet against her palm quickly.

Lei took the packet as he closed her fingers around it, noticing the look of worry in his eyes as he gave her a quick glance and headed over to the wall of boxes. "If it's the only one, why are you giving it to me," she asked bluntly, not bothering with subtleties. "You have worked the hardest; you are more deserving of it." Iceman turned around, holding a hand up to silence her.

"Just take it, please," he said, dropping his hand and shaking his head at the wall of boxes. "You're healing from a plasma wound. You need it more than I do. Besides, there is plenty of other food in these crates," He swore under his breath, slamming his hand against a crate and walking out of the room. "I'll be back in a second; I have to go get my helmet." He disappeared, the sound of his cursing and heavy footfalls echoing through the empty building. Lei sighed, looking at the gold foil of the MRE.

"Whole, dehydrated Rib-eye steak dinner," she read quietly, walking over to the bed and sitting down. "Cooked well done, add one cup of distilled water to pouch and let sit for ten minutes." She sighed again, laying the package down. "Human's are strange," she said, moving the sheets on her body enough to expose the stitches. They had been made with a cross pattern, small X's sewn into her flesh to close the gap the plasma round had left. She could not feel anything wrong with her any more, the internal pain gone, the soreness vanished, and she was even thinking clearly. "My people don't give food as special as this to the sick," she picked up the package, looking it over again. "Males only pass on a meal for a female when theyâ€¦"

0730 hours, October 8**th****, 2558. Earth Time.**

Location: Residential Square 43 of Tranquility Capitol City.

Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie, UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper

Status: Stressed/Anxious/Frustrated. Functional.

Iceman kicked at the door to the cockpit, further denting the Plasteel sheet and only frustrating himself further. "Come on!" He yelled, pulling his combat knife and stabbing at the surface, only succeeding in skidding across it with the tip. "I want that data package!" he slammed into the door with his shoulder, the top hinge popping loose. He slammed into it again, the door buckling around his arm as the last hinge broke, the lack of resistance causing Iceman to fall into the cabin. He looked around the cockpit, pushing himself up onto his hands as he searched for the data module. In front of him was the pilot, his head melded with the six inches of clear Plasteel from the impact. At his feet was an orange box, a square foot in all

direction with a red flashing light on the top. "You," Iceman said, grabbing a handle on the orange box and pulling it to him. "You have orders for high field command," he opened the lid, finding a place for a USB jack and a code panel. "But they no longer need them, so I guess I'll take 'em," He stood, walking out of the pelican and grabbing his helmet. Donning the item and closing the lid, he made his way back to the building he was hiding in, opening the sliding doors with the push of a button and walking in. He knew his helmet came with a compatible jack, but he was not sure if he was updated with the codes before fleet bugged out.

He walked down the halls, searching for the elevator that he knew was here. 'You would think an advanced civilization would have some form of directory," he thought, backtracking several times until he found it. He pressed the holo-panel, the doors closing and the platform beginning its ascent promptly. He stood there, his heel bouncing on the metal platform as his nerves escalated. He was in possession of classified information, for the high field command only, and if he ever got home, if the admiralty of the UNSC found outâ€|

He shook the thoughts away, putting the threat of court marshal out of his mind for now. He was in charge of the last remaining human force on this planet, along with a covenant defector. He needed to know all of the contingencies that had been prepared, hopefully finding one useful in their situation. He looked up, watching as the platform passed the levels, bulkhead style doors passing every fifty levels causing Iceman to wonder what was behind them. He dropped his curiosity as the platform came to a halt, ending three levels before the top floor. The doors opened, Iceman walking out onto the level with the orange box in his care.

****0800 hours, October 8*****th****, 2558 Earth Time.****

****Location: secluded glen eight miles from Tranquility capitol city****

****Private First Class Carlos "Geiger" Montoya, UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper****

****Status: Anxious, Functional.****

"Where is he," Carlos said aloud as he looked over the edge of an outcrop that shielded the new campsite from view of the city. He raised a pair of binoculars to his brow, checking the horizon for any sign of Iceman or encroaching hostiles. "It's been nearly twenty four hours since last contactâ€|" He lowered the binoculars, lowering to sit on his heels as he kept his vigilant watch. "Maybe something went wrongâ€|" He placed the scopes in a pocket, donning his helmet and activating the radio. Each hour he would send a message, each time increasing the range by one mile. He was at a seven-mile broadcast now, the jamming device in his Command Network Interface keeping anyone or anything from locating his position. "This is PFC Carlos Montoya, Service number j-190-78245-b34-d. I am sending this message to any surviving UNSC forces within range. If received, boost signal by five miles and give position." He set the transmission to repeat for half an hour, checking the horizon once more before turning back toward his camp.

The camp lay in a stand of trees, the foliage giving him enough cover to sleep comfortably. He had just started a fire, having set a pot

over the flames to cook a curry MRE, and had ten minutes of down time to relax. He closed his eyes, leaning against the trunk of a tree and allowing his mind to wander as his timer ticked down. However, something was wrong. After five minutes, the feeling of something watching him began to creep up his spine, prickling the hairs on the back of his neck and causing him to look around. He froze as he opened his eyes, noticing the glimmer of a cloaked figure sitting across the fire from him. The form was roughly human shaped, being slightly bulkier and taller than usual. He watched the cloaked person through his polarized visor, the figure unmoving and staring straight back into his eyes. If it were not for the breeze causing the ferns behind the being, he would have never noticed them. Acting as if he was still asleep, Carlos let his hand slide off his leg, falling from the action of his M6SOCOM to the ground. The figure followed his hand as it fell, returning to his visor as it lay still on the ground. Carlos' timer went off, beeping madly in his helmet. He swore silently, knowing the program was voice controlled. He had to act now; being certain that who or whatever it was could hear his head ringing like a rotary phone.

Carlos had no idea what had happened for a second. He was face down on the ground, embers from the fire flecking the area around him. His right arm was locked against the back of his waist, a weight on his left shoulder pinning him on the spot. As he recovered from his state of acting without thought, he remembered drawing his pistol and aiming at the figure, trying to stand before the form swatted the weapon from his hand and forcing him into a submission hold on the ground. He clenched his teeth, pushing up from the ground with his legs in an attempt to get free. The weight held firm, Carlos getting nowhere in his exertion and he knew it. He lifted his legs, pushing against what he thought was a chest this time, trying to pry the attacker from his back but to no avail. He gave up, sighing and falling back to the ground. "Rank and orders," a garbled and disguised voice said, Carlos presuming it was his assailant. He remained silent, feeling something hit him on the helmet. "Are you deaf? I want your rank and your orders!" Carlos blinked as dots danced in his eyes, the strike having affected him through his armor and padding.

"PFC Carlos Montoya, call-sign Geiger," he said, complying. "My orders are to secure the planet with the landing force for ONI and HighCOM so they can study the Forerunner civilization." He waited, being hit on the head again.

"I want your current orders," the voice said. "The ones you have now that everyone is dead." Carlos growled, fighting again to get the assailant off his back but making no ground. He gave up again, biding his time to strike back.

"Corporal Frederic Carnegie gave me orders to move the camp away from the city we landed in," he said, struggling again to get up. The assailant placed more pressure on his shoulder and arm, quelling his resistance.

"Where is Corporal Carnegie?" The voice halted, shaking Carlos mildly before pulling him to his feet. "By order of Captain Thomas Laskey of the UNSC Infinity, you are hereby relieved of your orders. You are to stay at this location until I return, where upon I will issue further orders." Carlos stood frozen, the force on his arms and back gone. Had he heard UNSC Infinity? That couldn't be, it was still just

an idea. But his ears didn't lie. Had it taken them that long to reach the planet? Could the war be over? Could he be in a zone of misinformation from being so far from home?

****0900 hours, October 8****th****, 2558. Earth Time.****

****Location: Residential Building 1222 of Tranquility Capitol City.****

****Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie, UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper****

****Status: Functional****

Iceman sat on the edge of a crate, Lei having sat him there over an hour ago, and was now picking his scalp as she paced the room. She had began to speak nearly once every minute, but each time she would stop, continuing her pacing with increasing vigor as she mulled her thoughts and formed words in her head. He had been admiring a fleck of dandruff on his fingertip, making a mental note to find if the cities sanitation systems were functional, when Lei stopped before him, dropping her arms to her sides and staring him in the eyes. "Do you find me desirable?" she asked bluntly, Iceman staring wide-eyed at her and nearly falling over.

"What," he questioned, his voice nearly a scream in the nervous situation. He closed his mouth tight as Lei flinched from his outburst, knowing this situation had to be defused cautiously. He didn't know much about her culture, but when human women asked the question it was a question of opinion. "Iâ€| will admit that you are more appealing than others of your species I have seen, yes," he sighed, wishing that he could go back to analyzing the fleck of dandruff now. "What brought this to your attention? What made you think you should ask my opinion on your looks?" Lei stammered, words forming in blurted jumbles and skewed sentences. She stopped herself, having in her mind already completed a soliloquy but knowing no one had understood it.

"It was just a feeling I had in the back of my thoughts when you took great pains to convince me to allow you to heal my wounds," she began, her voice soft and slightly shy. "That suspicion grew when I awoke and you had written the note to help me if I was having trouble and you weren't there. But what really got me to think about it was when you gave me the meal. You said it was the only one, and that I should have it." Iceman nodded once. Lei sighed, walking to the window and staring out into the light rain that had begun to fall. She mumbled something to the glass, blushing as she said it.

"Say again," he asked, getting up and walking closer to her. Lei clenched her fists, shaking slightly as he watched her.

"The only time males surrender gifts to females in my culture is when they find them worthy of mating," she said, Iceman taking his turn to blush as the gravity of the situation hit him like full metric ton of bricks. Lei turned to face him, trembling in her tension. "Do you wish to mate with me," she asked, nearly screaming the words at Fred. He stood there, blinking at each second as he tried to comprehend what she was saying. Lei seemed to relax at the revelation, her trembling easing as she took steps toward him. She repeated her question, each time Iceman saying a single word. "Do you wish to mate

with me?"

"Iâ€|" Iceman stopped, thinking about what he had almost said. Was he about to seriously say that?

"Do you. Wish to. Mate. With. Me?" She asked again. Iceman blinked twice, shaking his head to clear the fog that settled in his thoughts.

"Iâ€| I uhâ€|" He turned around, trying to gain his composure, thinking of a way to work out of the situation until he felt someone touch his shoulder. He turned back around, looking dead center to Lei's neck. He tilted his head back slightly, finding her staring at him with a soft gaze. "I don't knowâ€|," he muttered, her golden eyes having a hypnotic effect on him. Lei giggled slightly, placing her free hand on his cheek. "I have a sinking suspicion that I am about to find out thoughâ€|" Lei chuckled, leaning in and kissing him.

****0900 hours, October 8****th****, 2558. Earth Time****

****Location: central square of Tranquility capitol, former human base of operations designate Flag Pole****

****Upgraded SPARTAN II Commando Kelly-084 "Rabbit"****

****Status: Activated, Functional.****

The Brute fell to the ground, littering the square with the remainder of his now deceased regiment, a combat knife lodged in the side of his skull. Kelly bent at the knees, pulling the titanium blade from the dead Brute with ease before shaking the brain matter from it. "Clear," she said to herself, scanning the rooftops for any more snipers before sheathing her knife and drawing her MA5D rifle. She dropped the extended sixty-four round clip, loading another before slinging it again. She drew her M6D-S pistol, loading a magazine into the empty bolt before cocking the weapon. She looked around the area, taking in the tactical opportunity the area once held as she loaded her M6J Carbine, sliding the stock forward and holstering the long pistol. "What went down here," she mumbled, drawing her rifle yet again and making her way to a slightly rotted human. She knelt down, pulling the data card from his neural lace and depositing it in a pouch on her Infiltrator model armor. She repeated the process several times, turning over the bodies of human soldiers in outdated gear, taking their mission record cards and tucking them safely away for later viewing.

"Demon," The high-pitched cry of a grunt sounded behind her. Kelly sighed, quietly drawing her silenced pistol and firing a round behind her. The puff that came from her silencer was followed by the thump of flesh on lead, the thump repeating its self as the round exploded, casting bone and luminescent cyan blood across a five-foot area. She stood fully, sighing and activating her upgraded VISR system, a hard link to the _Infinity_ sending her data of her surroundings from geosynchronous orbit. The area she was in was where a base of operations was supposed to be, the plan having gone to hell-in-a-hand-basket. She looked her map over, memorizing a path to the nearest empty section of city. The data that accompanied the map said it was a suspected residential district, the basis going off the metal frames of furniture and bedsprings that filled the

area.

'South east, five clicks,' she thought to herself, setting off at a jog toward the area. She knew she could run the distance in a matter of minutes, her speed being greater than any other SPARTAN or human in history, but the sheer number of hostile infantry kept her from going so fast. She had to be careful, because even the best could be overwhelmed. Therefore, she settled in for a solid hour of jogging; the alternative possibility being death or discovery.

****0910 hours, October 8****th****, 2558 Earth time****

****Location: Penthouse of Residential Building 1222, Tranquility Capitol City.****

****Special Operations Domo Lei 'Zamamee.****

****Status: Occupied, Healing from injuryâ€|****

Lei released her hold on the human before her, a violet blush painting the smooth blue surface of her skin as she gazed into the man's vivid blue eyes. She let out a giggle as he held his position, lips puckered and face reddened by what had just transpired. He let his lips return to normal, a soft smile working its way onto his face as he returned her look, eyes half lidded as endorphins flooded his system. "So what now?" he asked her, placing a hand over one of her hearts, the organ beating fast and hard through her bones and muscle. "I'm pretty sure this would get me some sort of rumor, but wouldn't this be an execution sentence for you?" Lei sighed, letting her hands slide to his shoulder pads. He was right; if the prophets found out she had mated with a human, she would be killed on the spot. No trial or jury would be swayed in her favor. The only path this lead to for her was execution. Unlessâ€|

"What if I returned to your home world," she asked. "I would tell them anything they wanted to know. I'm a wealth of secrets; a valuable asset to your Office of Naval Intelligence should I defect." She felt her emotions well inside her chest, threatening to burst the dam she had built to keep them hidden. Iceman looked down at the floor, turning his head to the side slightly as he considered the possibilities. ONI would give anything for a defector at this point; the war was all but lost at this point, and they needed a trump card. Butâ€| He also knew that once they got her information, they would more than likely perform a vivisection to find out how best to kill her race. "Icemanâ€|" Lei said, pleading with him before he held up a hand to silence her.

"Call me Fred," he said, smiling up at her. "Iceman isâ€| a name I use when I'm killing people. I don't want this to be stained by my red ledger." Lei nodded, wrapping her arms around him and bringing him into a close embrace. In the few days she had been with the human, to her surprise, she had become very attached to him. He had saved her life, twice now, had sacrificed for her and had gone out of his way to get her something she wanted. She hated to admit it, but he had been kinder to her than even her closest friend had. She felt his arms wrap around her as well, squeezing her abdomen gently, taking care not to stress her stitches. Lei released her captive as he loosed his grip, kissing him again. This time the kiss went deeper than it had before, leis mandibles nipping at his lips and lips and jaw as his tongue explored her mouth. She liked the way he moved, the

soft flesh tugging at her teeth before caressing her gums. The sensation brought more blood to her cheeks, deepening the violet of her blush.

****0920 hours, October 8****th****, 2558. Earth time****

****Location: Penthouse of Residential Building 1222, Tranquility Capitol City.****

****Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie, UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper****

****Status: Occupiedâ€|****

To say that her way of kissing was interesting would be an understatement. The way her teeth scraped his skin, taking pains to be gentle, sent shivers through his body. Her movements were delicate, her touch light as she undid the clasps of his armor. The shoulder plates fell from their perch with the slight urging of her hands, followed soon by his arm guards. He releases his hold on her waist, reaching behind himself and pulling the emergency release cable on his chest harness, the plates falling away to the sides as their seal on his under suit broke. His armor-plated leggings followed the harnesses example, the light hiss issuing forth as the plates fell away. Lei giggled as she broke their kiss, her hands finding their way to the seals on the sealed black suit and opening them easily. "You humans and your armor," she purred, the warmth issuing from his exposed chest causing her hearts to beat faster. Iceman chuckled as her hand worked its way under the composite fabrics, her skin surprisingly smooth against his as she caressed his flesh. A slight moan escaped her throat as he placed his hands on her again, his right caressing her thigh as his left slowly stroked her back, his fingers toying with the loose knot she had tied in the sheet around her chest. Lei blushed again as his fingers closed around the knot, his light grip holding the fabric to her form before the sheet fell away, leaving her bare and exposed before him.

****KLIFF HANGAR ERMAGERD!****

****Yep, what of it?****

****So, I wanted to go ahead and get this chapter up. I didn't have the sex finished quite yet.****

****But that's a good thing! Because that means next chapter is all Lemon. ;D****

5. Chapter 5: The reason you are all readin

_The city was asleep, the stench of rot and death filling the air as the covenant slept in their chosen places. Jackals patrolled the roofs as Banshees circled like vultures overhead, watching for anything that might have escaped the walls or had entered past the Hunters on sentry. However, five kilometers into the metropolis and east of the center tower, in the penthouse of residential 1222, lay two beings, embraced in each other's arms, locked in a tango of passion and desire. _

****1200 hours, October 8****th****, 2558. Earth time****

****Location: Penthouse of Residential Building 1222, Tranquility Capitol City. Designate Palisades****

****Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie, UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper.****

****Special operation domo Lei Zamamee****

****Statusâ€| Undeterminable.****

Iceman rose from the covers for air, rolling over and panting at the ceiling before another head appeared from the covers and a body straddled him. He looked up into the amber eyes of the woman he had fallen for, leaning forward to kiss her as lowered her heat onto his member, enveloping him in warmth and sensation as they kissed yet again. He thrust up into her as she fell on his spear, impaling her with ecstasy as her velvet walls contracted and smoothly ran across his sensitive flesh. Their moans were muted against each other's mouths, hers on his lips and his on her mandibles, their ballad of passion playing to a symphony of lust.

****1200 hours, October 8****th****, 2558, Earth Time****

****Location: third story of Residential building 1222, Tranquility Capitol, designate Palisades. ****

****Upgraded SPARTAN II Commando Kelly-084 "Rabbit"****

****Status: Activated, Functionalâ€|****

Kelly kicked the door open, the lock being controlled by the electricity that was failing to work. She walked calmly into the room, sliding her thumbs into the grooves underneath her helmet, the vacuum hissing as she slid the streamlined item from her head, allowing her blue hair to fall between her shoulders and to her waist. She opened a pouch on her chest, withdrawing a wrapped MRE. "Apple Strudel," she mumbled after glancing the package over, tearing the foil wrappings away and taking a bite of the pastry. "Blueberry," she said in resign, having lost against her guess again. She took another bite, chewing it carefully before swallowing the mouthful. "Edible," she resigned as she continued to devour the pastry, Blueberry not being her favorite but dealing with the flavor. In moments, she had finished her meal, her helmet chirping as she tossed the foil away. She brushed the crumbs from her hands, lifting the piece and sliding it back over her head.

*****Message from Infinity Actual. Accept transmtion; Y/N" ****

'Of course,' she thought, the Y highlighting in gold before a box opened on the left side of her visor, presenting the face of Thomas Laskey in his Captain's regalia. "Captain," she said curtly, Thomas looking up from something that had held his attention and smiling.

"Kelly," he said. "Have you found the reason we haven't heard from the expedition in six years?" She flicked her vision down, looking to the data cards that were in her palm.

"All of the soldiers are in outdated gear," she reported. "And there are dead Sangheilli Domo's dead alongside them in covenant war era armor." Laskey's eyebrows rose at the mention of the Human Covenant war. "I have made contact with a Private First-class Carlos Montoya of the UNSC's ODSB battle group sent with the fleet. I have also collected Data Cards from the fallen soldiers Neural Interfaces for viewing to determine what went wrong." Laskey nodded, ordering her to view the data and search for any more contacts before returning to a designated pickup.

****1210 hours, October 8****th****, 2558. Earth time****

****Location: Penthouse of Residential Building 1222, Tranquility Capitol City. Designate Palisades****

****Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie, UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper.****

****Special operation domo Lei Zamamee****

****Status: Occupied, Engaged in activities. Do Not Disturb.****

"Ah!" Lei cried for the sixth time that night, the climax tearing through her body causing her to shake in pleasure. She was lost in ecstasy as Fred continued his work, lapping at her folds beneath the covers with learned precision, her anatomy nearly matching that of a human in the aspect he was currently engrossed. Transparent blue fluids poured from her body, the taste akin to sugar in his opinion, the stream of pleasure flowing free as her climax was sustained by his mouth. She began to shake under his ministrations, moaning loud as her hands danced across his shoulders, neck, back and hair, clutching at him gently, urging him to continue his lovely assault.

****1230 hours, October 8****th****, 2558, Earth Time****

****Location: third story of Residential building 1222, Tranquility Capitol, designate Palisades. ****

****Upgraded SPARTAN II Commando Kelly-084 "Rabbit"****

****Status: Activated, occupiedâ€|****

"Alright, let's set up here." A man said off screen, his helmet mounted camera capturing the activity around him as he supervised the operation. Several marines in Human-Covenant era armor walked around, deploying heavy turrets, sandbag entrenchments and pulling crates by ropes. As the entrenchments were constructed, Marines milled about the crates, opening the majority and hauling out various electronic equipment and pavilion tents. Four large crates were left closed, a marine calling for the man.

"Commander, we need your codes to open these!" he called as he waved the man over. He set off to the crates, looking down at a datapad in his hands and activating the representation of the crates on the screen. He entered a seven-digit code, sliding a holographic bar down and stowing the pad in a pocket on his chest. As he snapped the hard-shelled pocket closed, a pneumatic hiss issued from the crates, the sides and tops cracking in staggered succession before the sectioned surfaces began to move, soon revealing four lab style

stations in a pyramid stance. "Thank you sir," the marine said, saluting the commander. The commander's hand blocked the camera for a moment as he saluted back, turning around to see a flagpole being raised in the center of the area.

"Good work troopers," he called out, getting their attention. "Give me four more hours of this kind of industriousness and this place will be set up perfect." The soldiers saluted him, a loud explosion drawing their attention as they raised their rifles to face the intruder. The camera panned to show an Elite falling to the ground, its chest harness torn open and scored from a brute grenade.

"Kill them all," the gravelly voice of a brute said, the chieftain coming into view with his hammer in one hand and a Mauler in the other. "The prophets wanted this land consecrated with their blood! It is the will of the gods that it be done!"

"Fire on that tango!" The commander ordered, MA5C rifle fire sounding as he drew his sidearm. He looked away from the fight as he fumbled with the holster, looking up in time for a brute gravity hammer to come into view.

_**\\Error/End of video/Malfun/KIA/InCap/Unkno/
E-3925740883/**_

Kelly sighed as she pulled the data-card from her helmet, tossing it into a four-inch tall pile beside her. 'Same story as the last,' she thought. 'Brute uprising, Great Schism, Betrayal of the Elites. These soldiers just happened to be caught in the middle of it.'

1245 hours, October 8**th****, 2558. Earth time**

**Location: Penthouse of Residential Building 1222, Tranquility
Capitol City. Designate Palisades**

**Corporal Frederic "Iceman" Carnegie, UNSC Orbital Drop Shock
Trooper.**

Special operation domo Lei Zamamee

Status: Heated Engagement. Do Not Disturb.

"I'm glad I let you do thisâ€¦" Fred sighed as he let his head fall back onto the pillows, his left hand stroking Lei's head softly as she bobbed on his rod, stimulating him as he had her moments before, her versatile and nearly opposable tongue stroking the length of the appreciable shaft as she took him into her throat, massaging the sensitive tip as she flexed the muscles that controlled her mandibles. She had taken pains to talk him into it, his fear originating from her teeth, of which there were many, but eventually she had prevailed, and he was quite pleased with the result. Lei was impressed with his endurance, having not once finished in the hours they had been engaged, instead focusing on her pleasure. She was not used to this kind of treatment, her customs saying the male has the say in who does what, but it was not unwelcome.

However she was beginning to become impatient, increasing the effort to cause him to finish. Her ministrations began to take effect, feeling him clench his muscles as she increased her pace. His breathing began to increase in speed, his hips involuntarily bucking

as she took all of him. He grunted, grasping her head and humping her jaws as he shot his load into her stomach.

She pulled away as he finished, giggling and slithering up his body, the teats on her breasts brushing his smooth and ridged flesh of his torso as she closed in on his neck. She lay her head on his neck, listening to the pulse that flowed through his jugular, nipping his flesh lovingly as she stroked his chest and abs.

"So what's next?"

1300 hours, October 8**th****, 2558, Earth Time**

**Location: third story of Residential building 1222, Tranquility Capitol, designate Palisades. **

Upgraded SPARTAN II Commando Kelly-084 "Rabbit"

**Status: Activated, occupied?"

"Fall in," The deep voice of an ODSST said, waving the rest of his team over before turning to face a wall. He hugged the structure close, M7s in hand, crouching behind a solid box of some sort. The three black armored humans closed on his position, each with assorted weapons and armor configurations.

"What's up lieutenant," one asked, checking his rifle before slapping his helmet.

"What's the matter Magnum," another, substantially smaller ODSST asked. "The rifle not agreeing with you?"

"Stow it, both of you," the ODSST behind the camera said. "The drop left me with some malfunctions too." Magnum nodded before taking off his helmet, opening a panel and messing with something before closing it and placing it back on his head. "This op just got escalated boys," the lieutenant said. "Take a look." He twitched his head toward the box, leaning around it to capture the object of interest. In a small square stood ten black armored Ranger class Elites, energy swords on their hips and Carbines in hand.

"Shit," one of the ODSSTs said over the radio, muting his helmet to keep concealed. "How the hell are we supposed to compete with that?" The lieutenant bobbed his head back and forth, thinking. "Unless you can pull a hail mary sir, I doubt we can do anything but request heavy support. I mean, were just five boots. Aint no way we can take these S-O-Bs."

"Lock it down Cowboy," he said back. "We were called in to check out some strange readings, and we found it. Here's the plan. Cowboy, you go with Magnum and flank them from the other alley. Longshot, you get up in that balcony," he pointed back across their six, indicating the structure. "And give them hell with that rifle." The black and red trooper nodded silently, heading out to his directive immediately. "Newbie, you and me are going to give them a bad day with some of these frags. Then lay down suppressing fire with our ARs. I'll empty a mag, then you. Keep the hurt flowing." The clean armored boot nodded, shaking slightly as he reloaded his rifle. "Now move. Remember Mag, you and Cowboy start laying down fire when the grenades go off." The two nodded, moving out and taking a left to get into

position.

The lieutenant pulled a couple of grenades from his waist, arming them and waiting until magnum radioed. "We are in position. Waitin on your signal," Cowboy reported. The lieutenant tossed the frags, as did the private beside him, both drawing their ARs as Longshot let loose his first round. He scored four hits in two seconds, reloading as the frags went off. Two more elites were sent flying, violet gore following them as they landed. Now the four troopers opened fire, keeping the remainder of the aliens pinned as Longshot picked off the remaining four with well placed head shots.

"Cease Fire, Cease Fire!" the lieutenant called, being met quickly with silence. "All right, good work. Lets clear this sector and rally with Highâ€|" he was cut off as the sound of a screaming elite reached his ears, turning to find a brute with raided Maulers bearing down on a now visible Spec-ops elite. "Shit! Open fire!" HE let loose with his AR, scoring hits but only making the beast of an opponent upset. He took two to the chest, the brute dispatching his tem before returning and lazily placing a round in his visor.

_**\\Error/End of video/Malfun/KIA/InCap/Unkno/
E-3925740883/**_

Kelly pulled the card from her helmet, dropping the last one in the pile beside her before gathering them and stowing them in a pocket on her armor. 'Same story,' she thought, removing her helmet and laying it beside her, breathing in the clean smelling air around her, 'However from a different perspective. To save face with Sanghelios we could blame it on the Brutes.' She picked up her helmet, standing and making her way to the door before something caught her ear. The sound was muffled, carried by the acoustics of the building fromâ€|

'The top floor,' Kelly thought, slamming her helmet home and beginning her ascent. Four floors up, the lights began to turn on as she passed, the Spartan checking her mission clock and entering an elevator. She pressed the symbol for ascension, the doors closing and the gravity increasing as the lift began to rise. She looked up, noticing the lift would only take her to the fourth floor from the top. She looked back to the doors in time to see them open, activating her active camouflage device and exiting the lift. She hit the stairs at a run, climbing them quickly and quietly, entering a hallway in a matter of seconds. The hallway contained crates of human design, the large boxes lining the walls, leading her to the only door on the floor. The sounds came from behind the portal, sounding now less like pained groans and more likeâ€|

She walked up to the open door, smirking behind her helmet as she leaned on the frame. Before her, three meters to the left of the door, was two beings, of separate planetary birthplace, intertwined in the rawest fixation of a living being. The human and Sangheilli female were partaking of the desires of the flesh, devouring the forbidden fruit. In short, they were fornicating. From the look of his hair and the sheets, they had been at this for a few hours. She made to notify them of her presence, something in her mind screaming for her not to. she halted her hand before it pounded on the door frame, taking a step back into the shadows of the hall. She turned around, keeping guard so as they would not be interrupted. This was the first recorded instance of Human/Sangheilli romantic relations,

and she didn't want this to be interrupted. This could be used as a bargaining chip to increase friendly relations with their reluctant galactic neighbors.

â€|

Kelly crouched in the hall, her forward audio receivers turned up and her aft receivers turned off, lost in thought as she kept a silent and unknown guard. Her mind wandered back on thoughts better left alone, of her childhood crushes and parents. Recently she had undergone augmentation to become a part of the SPARTAN IV project, gaining more of her repressed memories in the process of the surgery to fix her wounds in the engagement over Reach on that fateful day. No matter how many times she pushed it away, the name Carlos Montoya kept coming back to her thoughts, ringing an eerie bell in her subconscious.

These thoughts were broken, however as the sound of dragging footsteps were heard. She rose slowly, walking toward the stairs with her rifle drawn and aimed forward. She rounded the corner, descending the stairs, following the sound before she stopped before a pool of violet blood. She lowered her cloak, kneeling and checking the area before planting her fingertips in the fluid. It was slick, fluid and smelled of tar. 'Fresh bleeder,' she thought, wiping her hand clean on the ground before standing and raising her cloak once more. She picked up the wounded Elite's trail quickly, the pools of blood being two to three meters apart. The trail lead to a room with no door, the sound of labored breathing and pained grunts issuing from the door. She hurried to the doorframe, standing against the wall beside it.

"Honor above Lord," she called out, the room falling silent. She waited, having used a phrase FleetCOM had given her to end hostilities with a loyalist Elite. The sound of heavy steps followed suit, the head of a ranger class elite appearing in the door as he looked for the speaker.

"Gods above self," he said in response. "Show yourself. You will not be harmed." Kelly lowered her cloak, the elite drawing a plasma pistol and taking a step back. "How do you know our Treatise call demon?" The elite asked hotly, clutching his gut as violet blood leaked around his hand. Kelly kept her rifle aimed at him, old habits dying hard. "Wait, I know youâ€|" Kelly raised an eyebrow behind her visor. There was something familiar about the Sangheilli before her, but she couldn't quite place it. "Your voiceâ€| It is almost like the demon I killed above that planet. But surely you cannot raise your dead." Kelly's eyes widened at the mention of Reach, the orbs narrowing as she felt her finger close in on the trigger of her rifle. "You are the demon," the Elite said in astonishment. He lowered his pistol, esposing his chest. "You have earned your revenge human. I will not stop you. My honor is already gone, spread across the floors. Killing me would be a mercy." Kelly stopped as her finger reached the trigger, slowly lowering the rifle. "What are you waiting for? Kill me!" Kelly removed her helmet, smiling at the Elite before lifting her rifle and bludgeoning him over the head once. The Elite fell to his hands and knees, taking off his helmet and clutching his head. Kelly hit him a second time, knocking him unconscious.

"I know how your Honor works," she said as she slipped the rifle onto her pack. "I am going to have my revenge the way you hope I will

not." Kelly lifted the Elite into her arms, carrying him into the room, preparing to save his life.

****well... how was it?****

End
file.